



# Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee

*The mission of the Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee is to provide oversight for and promote communication between the Board of Supervisors, the Department of Social Services and its related agencies, and the community, with emphasis on providing information and recommendations that make the system more effective and efficient.*

## MINUTES

August 3, 2022

9:00 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

Meeting held In-person with Zoom option

### I. Call to order and introductions.

**Wilma**

Meeting called to order by Wilma Hashimoto at 9:02 AM with roll call by Elizabeth Bell. Introduction of Dalvin Baker as one of the new DSS CWS Deputy Directors.

### II. Approve minutes for *June 1, 2022*, and the current meeting's agenda.

Ari Martinez motioned to approve June 1, 2022 meeting minutes and the current meeting's agenda; Richard Bailey seconded the motion.

### III. Updates.

#### A. Legislative Updates.

**Elected Official Representative and DSS**

- Assemblyman Jim Patterson's representative, Dan Moreno, shared information regarding AB1671 with the hope of getting the bill passed, as it will affect current or former foster youth obtaining scholarships. This bill is currently being modified in the Senate. AB288 pertains to foster youth as well as non-foster youth has widespread support of the assembly. AB1735 pertains to foster youth who speak a primary language other than English and their right for pertinent information translated to their primary language. AB2189 assists foster youth aging out of the system and requires the County to assist the youth with their needs for sustainable housing and to verify their eligibility prior to exiting the system.
- Maisie Young asked if there are any updates on AB740. Dan responded that bill has widespread support of the assembly and is currently placed in the suspense file. It is on hold, but they have until August 31, 2022 to get it done.

#### B. Department of Social Services Addressing Critical Areas.

**Dalvin Baker**

- Dalvin Baker presented a PowerPoint on the restructuring of the Child Welfare Services division. CWS has been split into two branches with a second Deputy Director, Kimberli Smith, added to oversee the second CWS division. Kimberli will start with Fresno County DSS CWS on August 8, 2022. Kimberli is coming from Kings County.
- The structure outline for Child Welfare will have an Intake Branch consisting of 3 Emergency Response (ER) divisions and 1 Placement and Support division. The second CWS branch will be the Ongoing Branch, consisting of 2 Family Reunification (FR) divisions, 1 Adoption division, and 1 Planned Permanency Living Arrangement (PPLA) division.
- Dalvin spoke about the Director's efforts in increasing the number of Program Manager positions within Child Welfare, and the addition of an 8<sup>th</sup> PM as well as an 8<sup>th</sup> division.
- Program Manager interviews took place at the end of July and offers have been made to interviewees.

#### C. DSS Presentation from Dalvin Baker on work with InTelegy for CWS Branch.

**Dalvin Baker**

- Child Welfare Services is in the process of updating and creating new business processes to improve access and delivery of services to clients.
- New businesses processes are being implemented in consideration of post-pandemic needs, State feedback, outcome data for children and families, Social Worker staff turnover, audits (RFS, Adoptions, overtime), new laws and regulations, staff concerns about high caseloads, insufficient support for staff and clients, and negative media stories.
- Dalvin also shared areas of celebration: increased community outreach and education, State approval of the written plan for licensing of the shelter at MOD-C, located at the UMC campus, and especially the approval for up to a 9-day stay for foster youth awaiting placement, Mental Health First Aid training for SWs, enhanced employee recruitment strategy, Board approval for increased SW wages in May 2022, and the move to the Clovis Campus and the increased space it provides.
- Opportunities for growth in Child Welfare Services: continue to build community trust, work with the State to develop a plan to address emergency housing for youth with complex needs, additional staff training, explore ways to increase employee recruitment and retention, address backlogs in court, and Emergency Response and Resource Family approval.
- Dalvin presented side-by-side comparisons of County and State/Federal data on placement entries and child and family service review and safety.
- Branch objectives include improving child safety and wellbeing while decreasing children in care, increasing partnerships, decrease entries into the CWS, determining reasonable workloads for County employees, developing processes to consider the biological and caregiver families' needs, and develop cross-program collaboration with minimal handoffs.

- The 6 prioritized work groups and objectives include: **Quality Parenting** (reaching out to Quality Parenting Initiative to re-engage them to work with the Department again), **Standby Planning** (addressing an afterhours need to support the community), **Training and Coaching** (reviewing and enhancing training and coaching for current and new SWs and SWSs), **Court Improvement Process** (addressing the thoroughness and timeliness of court reports), **Complex Needs Youth** (MOD-C is in place and is receiving assistance from the State, but how can DSS work more effectively with youth with complex needs), and **Specialization Review** (there are about 70-80 specialized positions with the department so doing and an evaluation and assessment of the 70-80 specialized positions within the Department is needed to determine current efficacy).
- The remaining objectives include: **Workforce Wellness and Supports** (to ensure a healthy workforce , creation of a County plan for Family First Prevention Services Act implementation, **ER Process Review** (effectively addresses the concerns regarding the overdue referrals in ER),, **Placement and Search Practices** (ties into complex needs youth; ensure the Department is being purposeful in the placement search for youth), **Family Urgent Response System (FURS)** (review and revise County plan to ensure current agreement is meeting stated needs), **Housing and Shelter** (assess the current processes while considering families that may not have access to immediate housing), **Intensive Services Foster Care** (develop infrastructure to support enhancement of home, parent, and youth needs), and **RFA Review** (overdue RFA referrals that need mediation; assess how to accomplish this more effectively).
- Regarding the development and continuation of the workgroups, Dalvin stated that community, resource parents, and the courts should be engaged.
- Wilma let Dalvin know that that they would like to facilitate outreach by forming small group forums and send out flyers.
- Dalvin reported that Sanja and the rest of the Executive Team intend to present on the CWS restructuring to all DSS staff in a way that affords staff the opportunity to ask questions.
- Richard Bailey believes there should be FCSOC members present in the courts to receive helpful information to improve the system. Wilma said she has reached out to Judge Dolas and that Judge Dolas is currently working internally with commissioners but has plans to open the court for representation, but that the Courts want to ensure the infrastructure is established for how the meetings are to run. Wilma also spoke in support of having representation from the FCSOC present in the courts as well.

#### IV. Review of Action Items.

Wilma

##### A. Vote on Attendance Options for September 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting

- Maisie Young motioned for the September 7<sup>th</sup> to continue as a hybrid meeting, with the option of either virtual (Zoom) or in-person; Elizabeth Thomas seconded the motion.

#### V. Subcommittee Updates.

##### A. Education

- No updates.

Pam

##### B. Children's Mental Health

- Link provided for the next mental health meeting being held on August 25, 2022 at 9:00 AM:  
<https://fresnocountyca.webex.com/fresnocountyca/j.php?MTID=m333de268a65ae8f8835e0da724a0b0595>

Wilma

#### VI. Round Table Discussion by members.

All

- FCSOC Committee membership: Wilma shared that the Board of Supervisors has added 6 new appointees within the last year.
- Wilma shared that the Annual Report for 2022-23 FCSOC Strategic Plan will be presented to the BOS on September 6, 2022, at 9:00 AM.
- A draft of the Annual Report was shared with all meeting participants for them to offer suggestions/updates to Wilma and Pam prior to the final draft being submitted to the BOS.
- The draft report included information regarding a new subcommittee that will be added in the 2022-23 fiscal year (Quality Parenting Initiative – QPI)
- The Annual Report also included information regarding 2021 priority issues: most goals were met and there has been continuous improvement in having a directory of resources available for stakeholders.
- The 2022 priority issues that still need to be addressed include: 1) Continue to work with DSS to improve dissemination of information to reach stakeholders in the foster care systems, including foster children, foster families, biological families, County Social Workers, Foster Family Agencies, legal counsel for children and families and judges 2) Work closely with DSS to provide support and oversight to the systemic changes identified in the critical needs document which was based on recent interviews and data collection provided by DSS Child Welfare 3) Ensure the system for the public to contact the FCSOC utilizing the Fresno County website is functioning well and meeting the needs of the public and the FCSOC. The link is as follows:

<https://www.co.fresno.ca.us/Home/Components/Form/Form/20f4a57296d044469b3dbc7d3260facb/>

- Recommendations to the BOS were also shared from the Annual Report and are as follows: 1) Continue to prioritize support for the youth under the care of the County’s Child Welfare System, to achieve the best positive outcomes and prepare them for successful adulthood 2) Continue the increased support in 22-23 by supporting the systemic changes identified in the DSS critical needs document 3) Support the expansion of mental health services and mentorship to support the unique needs and mitigate the trauma experienced by the children and youth in foster care and those youth who have crossed over to the juvenile system 4) Support the expansion of services and support for youth who are preparing for adulthood, including high school graduation, housing and budget as stance, life skills training and a linkage to a responsive and supporting adult/mentor 5) Improve the academic outcomes for students in foster care by supporting the practice of making a school move only when a child or youth has completed the school year, or determine it is in the child/youth’s best interest to move schools.
- Comments/recommended edits for the Annual Plan: Elizabeth Thomas had a concern regarding Recommendation 5: She asked if it has been considered that many times when a child’s placement is disrupted, there are limited resources to keep that child at the school. She also mentioned that Clovis Unified school district has limited foster homes so when there is a child going to school in Clovis and there needs to be a placement change, many times they will not be able to find a home. The response to this was to edit Recommendation 5 as follows: “...the practice of making a school change only when a child or youth has completed the school year or in the best interest.” Richard Baily expressed concern with number 2 priority issue to be addressed. He said it should be edited to, “Work closely with DSS and court...” and stated that the court should be the center of all of it. He also mentioned training is a concern. He believes the goals should be disclosed along with the metrics and would like to see specific areas of improvement. Pat Scovill mentioned that for those older youth that are not doing well in academics, there should be opportunities for them to go to work/trade schools and discussed the possibility of fee waivers.

**VII. Public Comments.**

- Elizabeth Thomas shared the next Foster Parent Association meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 3, 2022, at 7:00pm via Zoom. E-mail: [fosterparentassociation.fresno@gmail.com](mailto:fosterparentassociation.fresno@gmail.com) for the Zoom link. Logan Martin from KYJO is the guest speaker. He will be doing a training on crisis strategies concerning Foster Care

**VIII. Adjourn.**

**Wilma**

Next meeting will be on September 7, 2022, in-person and virtually via Zoom. Meeting adjourned by Wilma at 10:38 AM.

**Committee Attendance**

| District 1                                       | District 2  | District 3  | District 4  | District 5  |
|--|---|---|---|---|
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sal Quintero<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ari Martinez (Proxy) |   |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Karina Perez | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacant                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> James Martinez  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rosemary Alanis | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamela Hancock  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wendy Yribarren         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maisie Young  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Thomas  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Bailey  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ed Avila        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jill Stepke  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracy Kashian | <input type="checkbox"/> Patricia Miller  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Connie Waldrop  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wilma Hashimoto |

**Attending Staff and Guests**

Catherine Huerta, Dalvin Baker, Elizabeth Bell, Julia Perez, Hillary Bolger, Karel Gonzalez, Linda Miramontes, Brian Van Anne, Miriam Flores, Focus Forward, Dan Moreno, Pat Scovill