

SITE SELECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE CHILD WELFARE TRANSFORMATION DESIGN COMMITTEE

MINUTES FROM THE October 29, 2009 Committee Meeting

Advisory Committee Members Present: Jeanine Livingston, co-chair; Nancy Sutton, co-chair; Mark Courtney; Trudy Marcellay for Jerry Meninick; Joe Mienko; Brenda Lopez, Mary Jeanne Smith and John Seals

Staff Present: Julie Dunnington, Partners for Our Children (POC); Jennifer Strus, Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee; Sydney Forrester, House Early Learning and Children's Services Committee

Others Present: Roxanne Lieb, Washington Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP); Marna Miller, WSIPP; Sara Lee, POC; Dana Phelps, Children's Administration; Rose Quimby; Rhonda Metcalf; Beth Canfield; Carrie Whitaker; Laurie Lippold

The co-chairs began the meeting by indicating that the membership of the advisory committee is set. The members introduced themselves since there were three new members in attendance: Joe Mienko, social worker; Mary Jeanne Smith, foster parent; and John Seals, former foster youth.

Dana Phelps discussed an updated site selection timeline with the committee. She indicated that there are 2 phases to the implementation of this bill. Phase 1 refers to the performance-based contract (PBC) conversion and Phase 2 to the implementation of the demonstration sites. Dana indicated that there are lots of options available as to different approaches to Phase I. There have been a number of discussions both internally and externally about these different approaches.

Dana passed out a paper entitled "DSHS - 2106 Readiness Tasks - First Wave of Work." This paper indicated a number of readiness tasks that have to be completed. Dana indicated that regardless of the approach to the PBC conversion, these tasks are the same. Dana explained the principles that CA will use to guide this effort.

The first readiness task is to engage with a broad group of partners and stakeholders; it is important to discuss with private providers what PBC is. To do this, CA will have to conduct multiple meetings in multiple places. If the TDC or Site Selection Committee wants Children's (CA) to obtain specific information to assist them in making their decisions, then CA needs to know this.

The complete structure for how to accomplish Phase I is not set but Jann Hoppler and Dana will probably be the leads for CA. They would like to start the process with the communities and stakeholders in November 2009. These will meetings will be open to the public and CA's plans to publicize the meetings in advance so interested persons and agencies can attend. Jeanine Livingston asked that once CA has the dates set, that the announcement of the meetings and dates be linked on the 2106 website.

Dana next explained the service array portion of the readiness tasks. She indicated that input from the TDC about the service array would be very helpful to CA. Dana also explained the collecting data task as well as the task regarding initiating work and planning with community partners etc. This task is focused only on the demonstration sites.

Dana explained that this task list will undoubtedly expand. The four tasks currently listed are those that must be done by a particular deadline to meet the statutory deadlines. She also indicated that some of the information collected by CA at these community meetings will be critical to the Site Selection Advisory Committee in selecting the appropriate sites.

Joe Mienko asked if the lead agency model is the model that CA will pursue in the PBC conversion. Dana indicated that, at this point, no decision has been made regarding what model should be used. Dana also explained that at the first community meetings CA will explain what PBCs are and what the demo sites are and the differences between the two. CA plans multiple meetings with the community to flesh this out.

Brenda Lopez asked how the community would be engaged. Dana indicated they had lots of lists of stakeholders, they would use word of mouth, other social workers. CA would like to engage not only the regular child welfare community but the greater community as well. They are trying to be as broad as possible. There are so many ways to get the word out that they don't just want to use the standard methods.

Mary Jeanne Smith pointed out that the reason to have community discussions is to see if the lead agency model is the model to be used. The model selected will be greatly influenced by the community meetings CA holds.

Dana indicated that the reason for the community meetings is to obtain information from stakeholders etc to decide the model match for this state given where we are and what we currently have in each community.

Trudy Marcellay asked whether any Regional Administrators had expressed an interest in hosting a demo site on the western side of the state. Nancy Sutton indicated that the RAs have some trepidation about the process and are looking at the risks and benefits of it. People see it as an opportunity but it's too early to make decisions.

Jeanine indicated that she is concerned that services being cut back now as a result of budget issues will further erode the services available later. How will 2106 affect the provision and availability of services? Jeanine also expressed concern about child and family safety during the transition.

Joe pointed out that the this advisory committee needs to know what model will be selected for the PBC conversion before it can do a lot of the work needed.

Julie Dunnington reminded the committee that the TDC will be looking for this advisory committee to make recommendations regarding statutory timeline changes. The committee members expressed a desire to have Denise Revels Robinson attend the next advisory committee meeting. Julie will invite her.

Marna Miller indicated that she and some of her colleagues went through the statutory language regarding the comparison of sites and the rest of the state and how big the populations in the demo sites need to be. The number of cases chosen depend upon the different outcomes chosen.

Mark Courtney raised the question of what a "site" is under the legislation. There are different ways to evaluate outcomes and the committee needs to know how a site is to be defined before outcomes can be appropriately evaluated. If there is only one provider in a geographic region then there is no competition in that area and there should be. A discussion ensued about whether site should be defined by geographic area or service population.

A further discussion ensued about the bill language that states that CA cannot serve family and kids who are served by a supervising agency but there does not seem to be a prohibition to supervising agencies and CA social workers working cases in the same geographic area.

Marna asked the committee what meaningful difference does the committee expect - the smaller the difference, the larger the sample needed.

There are issues regarding when a case goes to a supervising agency in situations when the CPS investigation is ongoing and services are offered needs to be decided. Nancy indicated that this issue is not insurmountable but we do need to call it out and pay attention to it.

An important question is when do we start the clock on the outcomes? On outcomes that are chosen where does Washington sit nationally now? This should be a statistic that we look at. Permanency, including reunification, re-referral and re-entry are 3 outcomes on which national data is available.

A discussion ensued about whether the Site Selection Advisory Committee should have a joint meeting with the Outcomes Advisory Committee. If that meeting occurred, the following information would be needed:

- Data on where Washington sits nationally on certain outcomes;
- How much variation there is in outcomes across the state.

Mark reviewed the data showing length of stay in care. After a discussion about the regional differences, the committee determined that before it decides to recommend that the statutory deadlines be extended, it needs more information about where CA is in working with the communities, more information regarding rotating assignments between CA and supervising agencies (definition of site).

The committee discussed three possibilities for demo site definition or information needed:

1. Geographic model - office; region; part of region;
2. Rotating assignment in same geographic area;
3. In areas where CA not providing services, how many supervising agencies will provide services.

Julie will discuss these ideas with Mary Armstrong, Charlotte McCullough and Fred Wulczyn and see what their thoughts are.

The committee also indicated that it would like to review at least 3 primary models used across the country and have the consultants discuss the pros and cons of each. Once we decide on the model, then would like to hear from those states (public and private agencies) as to how it was implemented.

Public comment was taken.