

SITE SELECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE CHILD WELFARE TRANSFORMATION DESIGN COMMITTEE

MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 14, 2009 CONFERENCE CALL

Advisory Committee Members Present: Jeanine Livingston, co-chair; Mark Courtney; Charlotte McCullough; Trudy Marcellay for Jerry Meininck; Joe Mienko

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); Sara Lee, POC; Dana Phelps, Children's Administration; Jann Hoppler, Children's Administration; Marna Miller, WSIPP

Jeanine began the conference call by asking Julie to go through the list of foster parents who had responded as being interested in participating on the advisory committee. Julie went through the bio sheets of each of the foster parents who indicated an interest. After a discussion of the various foster parent applicants, the advisory committee voted to select Mary-Jeanne Smith as the foster parent representative for the advisory committee. Julie will notify her that she has been selected.

The discussion then turned to the draft timelines prepared by the Children's Administration (CA). Dana Phelps indicated that based upon the feedback they received at the Transformation Design Committee meeting in September, they reworked the timeline and came up with two possibilities. The dates in both timeline versions are suggestions and are current thoughts about what CA could do.

The first possibility represents the classic way in which contracts are let by state agencies. This version would require additional resources to complete the conversion and demonstration sites by the timeline set out in 2SHB 2106.

The second possibility represents the contracts being let as client services contracts. The state has a bit more flexibility not only in the timeline but also with discussions with interested bidders. To use the second possibility would require the successful bidding agencies to directly provide some client services rather than simply contract with other agencies to provide the services required under the contract.

If the first possibility is selected, CA would need specific information from the CWTDC no later than July 2010. If the second possibility is selected, CA would need enough information so it could write up the scope of the contracts but it would need less information than in the first possibility in order to proceed.

Both timelines include a section called the Readiness Phase. Mark asked what CA is planning for this phase. Dana indicated that the transfer of cases to supervising agencies would be happening during this phase - it would not be something that would occur on a particular date.

The transfer of cases depends on staffing levels of supervising agencies and the staff training levels.

Charlotte indicated that the conversion to performance-based contracts and the demonstration sites are both pieces of a coherent whole that has yet to be articulated. There would be lead agencies in all six regions in which CA must transition out of 1800 contracts into contracts with lead agencies. In the demonstration sites, a fully integrated system is being tested.

Jeanine indicated that her understanding of legislative intent around the PBC conversion is that moving to lead agencies was not what the legislature intended. Jennifer indicated that the legislation on this topic is written very broadly and it is really up to CA and the TDC to determine the best method of implementing the conversion requirement in the legislation.

Mark indicated that he thinks the use of lead agencies in the conversion process makes it much easier to move to the implementation of the demonstration sites. In the demo sites there would be an integrated delivery system where lead agencies have both case management responsibility and service provider networks, which would already be present because CA would have accomplished this under the PBC conversion.

Charlotte indicated that if this is the approach to be taken (possibility 2), it might be a good idea to put a detailed invitation to participate together for potential supervising/case management agencies. The CA could do a start-up contract with those agencies and have a series of deliverables all developed with the supervising agency and with community stakeholders to create detailed transitions, case models etc. There would be a 6-month time period for start up and a phased-in implementation, then a gradual transition so there would not be an exact time when the supervising agency would take over.

Jann Hoppler indicated that CA struggled with various ways to make both a cohesive development/implementation/procurement effort that may take longer than the statutory deadline would permit. Charlotte indicated that she played with the statutory deadlines and believes the demo site deadline of July 1, 2012 can be met but does not believe the conversion deadline can be met.

Jeanine indicated that one of the concerns WFSE has is the apples to apples comparison between private case management v. public case management and that the infrastructure would be completely altered so that if the Governor decides in 2015 not to expand the demo sites into other parts of the state, then CA would have to completely restructure again.

Charlotte responded that a lead agency would marshal a network of service providers to provide services for state SW - for the conversion portion. In the demo sites, the supervising agencies would provide case management for those kids targeted to be served. The case management agency would have the same network of services that the state agency has. The case management stays the same indefinitely throughout the state.

Jeanine asked whether in order to be a lead agency must the agency agree to provide a certain level and kind of services? Charlotte indicated that this would be required.

Mark stated that one of the reasons there is service inconsistency across the state is because the contracts are so fragmented. To deal with this, a lead agency would provide services as a group that a small agency would not otherwise be able to provide. It would mean that providing a rare service is part of getting a bigger contract - it creates an economy of scale.

Dana indicated that the definition of lead agency that CA is currently working with is an agency that manages a network of providers.

Jeanine indicated that she has heard from social workers that there is some backlash from private providers who do not want to contract with other private providers to provide services. If the conversion timeline was moved from January 2011 to August 2011 (as suggested by Charlotte earlier in the conference call) then this would provide more time to work communities and providers about the process and would assist the social workers as well.

Jann indicated that for the demonstration site project, CA would need to have the TDC's recommendation about sites by next summer 2010. CA also needs to have information from the advisory committees about what's important to have in the sites, e.g. diversity etc.

Jeanine asked whether the adv committee or TDC needs to know what private agencies are interested in what geographic areas to proceed. Mark responded that he didn't know what we would ask the private agencies at this point. There needs to be a coherent plan for CA regarding the PBC conversion before the adv comm. can decide how to work through this.

Jeanine indicated that she had heard that some of the private agencies had expressed ambivalence about getting involved in 2106. Charlotte indicated that there may be out of state agencies interested in getting involved.

Charlotte, in response to a question about the tribal aspect of the process, indicated that she researched a number of states that took the approach taken by Washington in 2106 and the only state to include tribal input was Arizona and they treated the tribes as stakeholders.

Charlotte cautioned that Washington cannot just flip a switch and make this bill work. The state needs buy-in from the community and stakeholders and planning help from foster parents and courts as well.

Mark discussed the data on children in out of home care that was distributed to the adv comm. members. Data put together describes number of kids in care by greater/less than 60m days.

It is important to look at regions. Need to take into account how regions are organized now and what a demo site would look like.

Region 1 - over half the caseload is in the Spokane office so if Spokane is not included as part of a demo site then would have to include many more offices in R1 to get enough of a caseload to have statistically significant numbers.

Region 2 - Would have to include the Yakima, Toppenish and Sunnyside offices and that's about 500 kids - not sure if this is sufficient.

Region 5 - Two very big offices. Tacoma has 1300 kids in care. That office probably has a larger caseload than needed. Question is does one demo site include some of Pierce and some of King (R4)?

There ensued a discussion about additional data needed by the advisory committee.

Jeanine asked if there was any public comment and none was given and the meeting was adjourned.