



Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

Parent Advisory Group (PAG)

Meeting Minutes

November, 17 2023 – 10:45 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

Welcome, Meeting Protocols and Introductions

DCYF Community Engagement Manager, Emily Morgan, welcomed attendees and initiated introductions.

- [Community Agreements](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAG members broke into groups to review proposed community agreements and provide feedback.
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D.S. Settlement, System Improvements, Outcomes and Opportunities for Engagement

DCYF's Acting Director of Child Welfare Programs, Barbara Geiger, provided an overview of the D.S. lawsuit and settlement, and related system improvements, outcomes, previous stakeholder engagement and future opportunities for feedback.

- [D.S Settlement Presentation](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal: To increase placement stability and achieve a youth and family-centered, culturally and trauma-informed system of placements and supports for children and youth with behavioral health and developmental disabilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As nice as this all is, every kid is different, every diagnosis has different meaning. Wouldn't it be worthwhile to put focus on social workers' communication and feedback for individual needs. Or a workaround for caregivers whose social workers don't know what the diagnoses are. ○ I have one of these kids. I have tried several times for out of home placement, without success. I have no kin. I have A LOT to say about this topic. • I have tried several times for out of home placement without success. Social workers ignore emails and don't understand the complexities of medical issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I'd like to get responses to my emails, and I'd like the social workers to be required to communicate with the medical providers, at least when they take on the case, or more often. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ And what happens when a life is legitimately at stake? My granddaughter is in the hospital every month and yet nobody makes sure her visits with her father are safe. • I have a couple of decades training parents, teachers, medical professionals, etc. what to look for and how to support specific needs kids. I have other experience but that would be something I would like to
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	<p>contribute. Maybe if the households these kids were coming from had the resources and funding instead of vendors and contractors, they could go back home or would no longer need out of home placement. We're going to get what we fund. In my experience these vendors and contractors do poor work because they get paid no matter what. That needs to change and there needs some performance standards and metrics tied to the funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I would propose funding ABLE accounts to Thriving Wage Standards; when kids are in crises comprehensive respite programs (funding tied to metrics); thriving wage pay standards to Respite providers; Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave (WAPFML) and Sick Pay extended to Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) families; comprehensive before/after school SPECIFIC to this particular population. Boys and Girls Club and YMCA need Trained Behavior Techs to support these kids." ○ When I was young, a family member tried to kill me. The state removed me from my mom, and placed me with a stepdad I was not close with. All I wanted was my mom. I experienced trauma within the child welfare system and have had difficult interactions with social workers. This led me to wanting to become a foster parent through kinship care. Fund parents and housing, medical, mental health support, not out of home placements. Case managers should receive performance reviews by clients, and funding should be based off of performance metrics. I understand your stance and sounds like there were missed opportunities for support. The scope of this work is for children in out of home care. Maria Zdzieblowski (Director of Service Continuum) is also interested in engaging in this conversation. The underlining focus of this project is to create more parents supports and incorporate your feedback.
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Professional Therapeutic Foster Care

DCYF Professional Therapeutic Foster Care Program Manager, Ayn Witman presented the program and solicited feedback from PAG members.

- [Professional Therapeutic Foster Care Presentation](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this group want to participate in this development? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workgroup and PAG group identify crucial moments.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Representatives from work groups present/ pose questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can we participate in the work group? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes; we have parents already and if you are passionate we can add you to the group. ▪ This will be different group from Negotiated Rule Making for Group Care? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes; will gather names for all feedback opportunities. ▪ Are we having parent Tribal representation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes; that is our intentions we have a letter sent to Tribal Nations for different voices.
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Working Lunch: PAG Roster & Webpage Review

[PAG Webpage](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees reviewed the PAG webpage and Roster.
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PAG Feedback Discussion

This section of the agenda was originally intended to develop a list of deliverables or potential topics for future agendas, but to meet the needs of the group the conversation focused on meeting and logistic feedback.

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to hear from Ross Hunter; “he’s a number guy and rich guy.” Is basically what he told a group of us years ago. I’d like to hear how he feels now after being in his position for a while. Is getting the number of kids in care down more important to him than ensuring safety? • I notice we don’t always have enough time. Let’s be mindful to presenters, but also we don’t have enough time for our questions and responses. We don’t have enough time allotted for each time and items get parking lotted. • This is about fixing the system, and if it’s an issue with money I’m ok with giving up my reimbursement and mileage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It’s not about reimbursement and thank you for sharing. We can discuss future meeting length with the executive committee. • Can you talk about the logistics of the meeting? It would be good to have ground transportation or carpooling. I don’t have a lot of money and luckily, I found someone who was carpooling. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○
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- The hotel is beautiful, but I would much prefer a hotel that includes breakfast.
- I had to pay for parking. I don't like that.
- We are hearing that PAG prefers hotel meetings over community-based meetings for transportation reasons. We will focus future in-person events at hotels.
- It would be helpful to get our travel information in advance because I had to move meetings and other things around.
- Yes, we can commit to giving the travel email at least a week in advance.
- I would attend meetings virtually and I noticed not all voices are being accounted and heard. Also, I think you need to think about your community, asking for credit card hold (hotel deposit). A parent might not have that money. Also giving me time flight options (AM or PM better).
- Paying for parking, plus meals and I'm having to pay for will I get reimbursed?
 - Yes you will be reimbursed; we are bound by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) rates as a state agency.
- Members in the chat aren't always being included and we want to make sure they are contributing too. Can we make the chat screen visible too, there's a way to divide the screen.
 - And it may look like the chats aren't being read on the zoom, but we are reading them and noting them all.
- : I added a lot in the chat, and I don't know my comments got shared. Another reason to have more meetings so we can share our experiences.
- I want to bring up food allergies; tomatoes and couldn't eat the food.
- Land acknowledgements only exist in certain systems and lands and I was feeling uncomfortable. We acknowledge stolen land but not labor.
- As a Native, a land acknowledgement was great but the trust is hard in our communities because there's harm. Next time, invite a tribal member to do an acknowledgement.
 - Thank you for sharing and being vulnerable. We are working with our Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) and want to keep working to do better
- We also need to include Tribal parents because they're voices are underheard and there's a loss of trust in the community.

Additional suggestions:

- Having more time in meeting (feels like we're parking lot agenda items)
- Creating a support text group (for logistics, etc)



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hotels with breakfast• Meeting twice a month• Giving travel accommodations more in advance (two weeks)• Want to hear from Sec Ross Hunter• Travel emails: include meal, transportation options• No Credit card hold at hotel• Opening- land acknowledgment- systems only acknowledge certain lands (it's discriminatory). We are not acknowledging stolen labor.
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Strengths and Challenges Assessment Pilot

DCYF Child Welfare Researcher, Doug Klinman briefed members on the feedback opportunities for the pilot project to develop a Strengths and Challenges Assessment with Chapin Hall.

- [Strengths and Challenges Assessment Pilot Presentation](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question 1 feeds an idea that a child is being mistreated and influences the biases of the assessor.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Thank you for that feedback and we have edited the wording so it's not starting an assumption of guilt.• Is this assessment factoring in cultural competency? I would not feel comfortable completing this form. There's a sense of judgement, and for my community, we share as a need to know basis.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What can we do about assumptions and barriers? We've earned that reputation to not be trusted which causes barriers for our assessments and offer help to our communities. How can we do this better and be seen as a partner? We also struggle with how child welfare assesses within different cultures. I can't assess a culture I don't understand.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Child welfare is a law enforcement agency. Have someone from DCYF who is culturally competent. If we don't decolonize and push for abolishment, how are to trust? Otherwise it's just the same with new branding/marketing and that disingenuous.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Thank you for speaking up, and I agree with what you're saying, and I don't have answers. It is a challenge and we have earned this reputation, and the
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	<p>community feels we are a policing agency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You're asking us to come together in a workgroup and offer input, and these questions give me knots in my stomach. I didn't harm my children, I didn't have a support system and my children were taken away. Are these the questions that will be used? How often will you change these questions? How long have these questions been in place?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ These questions have been around for a while, 10-15 years. We have this new tool, and we're gathering your input then caseworkers will use it. Then we will revise these questions, use and discuss with families again. This is the beginning of a small pilot project.• DCYF should pair parents with caseworkers that would improve the child welfare systems. Engage with the community more and help us not feel so afraid.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I partnered with a social worker when I became a parent court advocate.
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Co-Chair Discussion and Elections

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PAG members voted Janel Waterman, Josie Garcia and Christianna Clinton to serve on the PAG Executive Committee• As discussed at the meeting, the Executive Committee structure and representatives will be re-evaluated in six months to best meet the needs of PAG.
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