

Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council

Friday, March 27, 2015

BMCW 635 N. 26 St.

Minutes

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Members Present: Sue Gadacz, Colleen Ellingson, Christine Holmes

Representative for State Representative LaTonya Johnson, B. Thomas Whelan, Tony Shields,

Judge Mary Triggiano, Deanna Alexander, Libby Mueller for Milwaukee County District Attorney's office.

Meeting was opened by Sue Gadacz for Linda Davis.

Notice

First, the notice of the meeting was published in the Monday, March 23, 2015 edition of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Second, the notice was faxed to the newspaper of record for the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin State Journal, on Monday, March 23, 2015. Finally, the notice was emailed to the Partnership Council stakeholders including any media who had requested such notice on Friday, March 13. This satisfies the requirements for notice under Wis. Stat. 19.84(1)(b).

Minutes from January 30, 2015 Meeting

Due to lack of a quorum, approval of the January 30 minutes was deferred to a future meeting.

Presentation of Settlement Data

Mark Sarvela presented the 2014 Settlement Agreement Report. Information gathered for the report is a valuable tool for quality improvement. We will look at which areas have declined try to determine what is happening and why it is happening.

Response from Eric Thompson

Ongoing caseworker turnover

Turnover has been a chronic issue, and has been a struggle over the last two years. Turnover rate is actually 59 percent. Lack of worker continuity may be reflected in other areas presented in the report

Stability

The Bureau has been making progress regarding the number of children who have experienced three or fewer moves while in care. However, a better job needs to be done for children who have had four or more placements.

The Bureau has been looking at reasons why children have multiple moves. Data indicates there are multiple reasons why children are moved. BMCW is working to categorize these moves and hopes to have more data regarding them in the second quarter of this year.

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Annual medical/dental exams

The current report reflects a drop in the numbers. We need to look at why this is happening.

Much work needs to be done regarding initial screenings. These screenings document the status quo for children as they enter out of home care and need to be done as soon as possible after placement. Goal is to have all initial screens go through CPC. The Bureau is working with Mike Lyday on this.

Safety

The report indicates that the Bureau is keeping children in out of care safe.

Red Flags

The decrease in the number of permanency plans and family assessments raises a red flag. This decrease can affect the ability to move children through the system in a timely manner. Caseload numbers have been creeping up.

Critical Incident Committee Report

The Committee's Recommendation Report was distributed and discussed.

Interim Director's Report, Mary Pat Bohn

Agencies are putting placement stability plans in place.

The Quality Parenting Initiative was explained and the branding statement distributed. Meetings will be starting in April. Please contact Sarah Henery if you are interested in participating.

The Training Partnership will move to centralization in Madison in July 2016. UW-Milwaukee will continue to provide training for BMCW Initial Assessment and Ongoing workers. The Training Partnership will also be taking over training for foster parents and supervisors.

In July of 2014, the number of overdue cases was just under 3000. Currently the number of overdue cases is just over 500. The Bureau received a lower number of incoming cases in November, December, January and February than in the previous year for these months. The number of incoming cases began increasing in March.

Secretary Anderson – DCF Updates

We will be able to start moving ahead with the Division and the search for a Administrator once the budget is passed. Our goal is to move as quickly as possible.

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If the Budget is passed, BMCW will receive funding for:

- Eleven additional new staff.
- Community Connections – program that builds on theory that relationships provide critical support and help build resilience for vulnerable families.. We will be looking for community leaders who will be hired to do connections.
- Grant for \$11 million for visiting home program.
- Five million dollars for domestic violence work.

Children older than the age of 18 who need to finish high school will be able to stay in foster care if they stay in school.

Youth Aids will transfer to DCF.

Agency Reports

Ann Leinfelder Grove from SaintA

Saint A is working on the issue of staff retention and turnover, and is taking a systemic approach to what is working and what is not. As of today, SaintA is fully staffed. They are working on the Trauma Informed Care module.

David Whelan, from Children's Hospital (CHWCS)

Children's Hospital is working on staff retention, and recently added seven new hires. CHWCS is helping workers with the relationship with children's court and in dealing with the stress and unpredictability in reporting to court. They are looking at family preservation versus the best interest of the child.

Judge Triggiano

We need to urge leadership in the Department to choose the right person for the Director position. This person will need to be someone who is able to deal with the stress and strain of the job.

Judge Triggiano is concerned that rotation of judges and turnover of staff mean people don't get to know each other.

The community sees us through the eyes of the media. We need to have a better relationship with the media and the media needs to do stories that project a positive picture of foster homes and the Bureau.

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Community Forum

It was suggested by a community member that staff turnover rate may be based on hiring “unlicensed” staff. Discussion was had regarding the importance of internships and the need to target the right population of students for Initial Assessment positions. It was also suggested that we look at the Michigan Model.

It was reported earlier in the meeting that case sizes are now near 500. Question - Have any of the overdue cases reopened? Answer - Cases may reopen no matter how long they have been open. PRES staff will look into tracking information regarding the number of cases that reopen and the different levels of intervention involved.

Kate Bauer provided information on Camp To Belong which is a weeklong residential camp that reunites siblings in a safe and neutral environment.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Zellner