DRAFT

STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
http://lachildrenscommission.org

Monday, January 11, 2016

10:00 AM

AUDIO FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (16-0362)

Attachments: AUDIO

Present: Commissioner Genevra Berger, Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Candace Cooper, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Wendy Garen, Commissioner Sydney Kamlager, Commissioner John Kim, Commissioner Janet Teague, Vice Chair Jacquelyn McCroskey, Vice Chair Wendy B. Smith and Chair Sunny Kang

Absent: Commissioner Maria Brenes, Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin and Commissioner Liz Seipel

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Call to Order. (16-0041)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kang at 10:00 a.m.

2. Introduction of meeting attendees. (16-0042)

Self-introductions were made.

3. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of December 7, 2015. (16-0043)

On motion of Vice Chair Smith, seconded by Commissioner Garen (Commissioners Brenes, Konigar-Macklin and Seipel being absent), this item was approved as amended to correct the second bullet on Agenda Item No. 9:

- **~~If needed~~, Los Angeles County can provide ~~a small amount of~~ funding via the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program and an alternative payments contract via the Department of Children and Family Services;**

Attachments: SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

II. REPORTS

4. Chair's Report. (16-0052)

Chair Kang reported the following:

- **Due to heightened building security, all employees are required to wear a permanent I.D. badge with an employee number;**

- **Instead of a regular meeting on February 8, 2016, the retreat will be conducted from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with lunch provided, at the California Endowment. Also, he asked that Commissioners contact their appointing offices prior to the retreat to gather input and/or feedback, in preparation for the upcoming strategic planning. Should there be any questions, please contact Tamara Hunter; and**

- **Thanked commissioners for their timely attendance and reminded them that meetings will start on time. Also, asked that commissioners notify staff if they will be tardy or absent.**

5. Executive Director's Update. (16-0194)

Tamara N. Hunter, MSW, Executive Director, reported that on December 22, 2016, Commissioners Smith and Garen visited and toured the Child Protection Hotline Center; Commissioners Garen and Smith noted that this operation is impressive; and calls are complex with a myriad of issues.

Director Philip L. Browning, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), indicated that the Hotline's IT services are managed by the Internal Services Department (ISD). Mr. Browning added that newly purchased work stations are in compliance with ergonomic requirements.

Ms. Hunter also reported that DCFS is currently in the process of obtaining the proper clearance and approval from the Court to allow Commissioners to accompany Social Workers on ride-alongs. Ms. Hunter indicated that another Hotline tour, as well as a tour of Probation Camps, can be arranged.

Commissioners Kim, Teague, Vice Chair McCroskey, and Chair Kang, expressed interest in attending a tour of the Child Protection Hotline Center.

Commissioners were reminded to please complete and submit the required Code of Conduct Acknowledgement form.

6. Department of Children and Family Services Director's Report by Philip L. Browning, Director. (16-0053)

Director Philip L. Browning, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) reported the following:

- **Attended a national meeting of Child Welfare Directors last week and there was a discussion on Aleghany County's Predictive Analytics tool. Aleghany County had a Request for Proposal (RFP) added about a year ago and plan to roll out the predictive analytics in March or April 2016 with the focus on their hotline so they can access data on a real time basis. Approximately 18 months ago, DCFS started working on a predictive analytics pilot with SAS Corporations and had good development, but was not able to move forward because they needed to develop an RFP. Child Welfare Directors will be meeting with a company called Mitre next week in Washington D.C. that deals with airline fatalities and predictions. There are a number of groups that are trying to come up with ways to identify risk better. The goal is to have social workers prioritize cases and many believe that predictive analytics is the new frontier for Child Welfare as it will help with how decisions are made.**

- **The Governor's budget proposal came out last week, there may be further discussion about it. DCFS is to provide the Chief Executive Office (CEO) Intergovernmental and External Relations (IGEA) Section with information.**

- **Since the San Bernardino incident, employees are questioning what can be done to improve safety. DCFS is pricing out walk-through metal detectors for some of their offices. While some offices have wand metal detectors, there is no uniform policy in place. At a State meeting, it was mentioned that there are two counties in California where Child Welfare agencies have metal detectors; San Francisco and San Diego. There is a debate within the Child Welfare community whether or not metal detectors set the right tone for families coming in. There are incidents where metal detectors are not effective. DCFS have existing safety training programs which they will roll out again. The Department is also looking into an active shooter training, which has not been done in a Child Welfare environment.**

- **Several jurisdictions are going through culture reorganization in terms of practice. Los Angeles County is going through the Core Practice Model implementation. Other jurisdictions have high attrition rates. Los Angele County's attrition rate is 12-13%. DCFS currently has 500 staff certified as facilitators, coaches, or coach developers; and encourages more staff to get certified to become a Child Family Team facilitator. There has also been a decrease in caseloads. In the past 18 months, Continuing Services caseloads decreased from 30 to 24. DCFS' goal is to drive cases down to 20 or below per office within the next six months. DCFS currently has an aggressive hiring program.**

- **The State had an application process for all counties to submit their proposal for funds available to utilize towards AB403. DCFS was approved for $4.5 million. The State approved half of the 20 initiatives that DCFS had submitted, which included emergency placement stipends, more tangible support, and caregiver support groups. DCFS is moving forward with the approved initiatives.**

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Mr. Browning responded the following:

- **Regarding attrition and caseloads, the Compton office has a much lower attrition rate although it's located near Vermont Corridor and Wateridge office, which have the highest attrition rates. The high attrition rates could be due to insufficient resources in comparison to other areas, safety issues, or gang activities and shootings that occur. DCFS contracts with the Sheriff's Department to accompany social workers during home visits where there may be problems. Mr. Browning indicated that they do not have a real time way of telling that the home has past criminal activities, whereas the Sheriff's Department has this information. However, this is not for routine visits. Caseloads in these areas are higher due to turnovers. A Caseload Equity Study was done three years ago and provided examples of the study. The study is refreshed periodically and the Commission will be provided with a copy of the last study.**

- **Regarding attrition in these offices, DCFS meets with the Union periodically. In these areas, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas had an all-hands meeting with staff to address concerns. Staff raised concerns about the lack of restaurants in the community, which the Supervisor had no control over.**

- **Regarding office set up issues, the disadvantage of hiring a lot of staff is that it takes longer to build out office space. There is currently a specialized unit in which staff are set up in a conference room, but staff reported enjoying being so close to their supervisor for guidance.**

- **The staffing situation in the Antelope Valley is more stable. DCFS is continually recruiting for this area. DCFS had a special recruitment for Antelope Valley that required applicants to live in the area. More than 100 applicants did not meet the requirement, but once DCFS fills this position, they will be in good shape.**

III. PRESENTATIONS

7. Presentation on 2016 Legislative Updates

- Martha Matthews, Public Counsel
- Sue Abrams, Children's Law Center of Los Angeles
- Angie Schwartz, Alliance for Children's Rights (16-0044)

Sue Abrams, Policy Director, Children's Law Center of Los Angeles, stated that attorneys have had caseloads of 300 for the past three years. They have been lobbying the State to increase the budget for Statewide Dependency Council. According to a study that the State Commission conducted, attorneys should have a maximum caseload of 188 clients, with the help of social worker investigators to be effective. The attorneys currently will need $33 million from the State to bring it down to 188. The State granted them $11 million last year. There were no funds allocated in the Governor's budget this year, so they will continue to lobby the State to increase funds by $22 million.

Martha Matthews, Public Counsel, Directing Attorney, introduced the presentation and stated that there were a lot of bills passed in 2014 relating to foster care and Child Welfare, including AB403.

Angie Schwartz, Alliance for Children's Rights, Policy Director, provided the background of AB403/Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) and presented the following: A webinar on AB403 is available on the Set Up for Kids organization website.

- **The 2011 Realignment Bill required California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to convene a workgroup to figure out the movement of youth from residential care and institutional settings and ensure that all children can be raised in a family setting.**

- **The three year workgroup concluded and submitted a report to the Legislature in January 2014 setting forth their recommendation to achieve the goal of moving children out of group homes and into a family setting. The report is available on CDSS' website.**

- **In order to carry out the recommendations, CDSS sponsored their own legislation (AB403) which was authored by Assembly Member Mark Stone of Santa Clara.**

- **Alliance for Children's Right was involved in the effort from the beginning when the CCR workgroup was implemented to ensure that the workgroup focused on families and relatives.**

- **How CCR expects to achieve its goals:**

  - **Eliminate group homes and replacing it with Short Term Residential Treatment Centers (STRTC) - Most of what's included in AB403 will not take into effect until 2017 and full implementation by 2019.**

  - **Expand the role of Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) – allow relatives to be serviced the same way as a certified foster family. Set core services that all FFAs have to be able to provide and change the rate structure so that foster families can comply and spell out services in statute.**

  - **Require all families to be approved through Resource Family Approval (RFA) – It creates one process and eliminates all the different ways to approve, certify, and license foster families. Effective January 2017, Los Angeles County will approve families as "resource families". This will eliminate licensed foster homes, approved relatives, and FFA certified homes and families will all be held to the same high standards and receive same benefits and services.**

  - **RFA – AB403 does not change the current RFA process that is underway, but requires that RFA will be implemented statewide by January 1, 2017.**

  - **Five counties, since 2013, have piloted the idea to replace the manner in which homes are being approved and supported and the different standards homes are held to.**

- o One set of standards, one set of approval, and one set of training. Homes approved as foster homes will be approved as adoptive homes at the same time and will not have to go through a duplicative process.

- o AB403 included a timeline for the entire State to be up and running. Every county will have to be on Resource Family by 2017 and all current family must convert to Resource Family by 2019.

- There are some differences in AB403 regarding RFA: Permanency Assessment – there are more details in the psychosocial assessment. All families must meet 12 hours of training, then eight hours annually once they are approved. Per the statute, once families are approved, they will receive the same funding and benefits as any other family; this will eliminate inequity.

- Relatives will need assistance in getting training, as childcare was not built into the statute. Alliance for Children's Rights is working with the State to ensure that the roll out of RFA, does not affect the recruitment of families needed to achieve CCR's goals.

- The statute states that no family will receive funding until they are approved. This may make it harder to retain/recruit relatives because relatives enter the system after the fact; trying to meet the requirements once children are already in their homes. Non-relatives are able to plan time and expenses ahead of time while relatives are called in the middle of the night to take the child.

- The $17.8 million funding will continue through 2016-17 for foster care recruitment; it is not one-time funding.

Ms. Schwartz briefly discussed the CCR Implementation Framework chart provided in the supporting document. The chart indicates how the core services, rates, and accountabilities will work. All work groups within the framework are actively participating. Ms. Schwartz referenced the Steering Committee that was created for AB12 reform. The Committee ensured they knew what was happening and was ready once the bill took into effect. Ms. Schwartz indicated that it would be beneficial to CCR if those involved in making program and policy changes would proactively come together in the same way as AB12.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Matthews responded as follows:

- **Confirmed that group homes will be converted into STRTC with lower level group home models going away. They want all group homes to have capacity either within themselves or through a relationship with a certified mental health treatment provider to provide therapeutic services. So, a child is not placed in a group home because no one wants them, but because the home can accommodate their needs. Ms. Matthews stated while placed in STRTC the plan is to figure out how the child can live stably with a parent, relative, or a foster parent. It is about aftercare and discharge planning.**

- **Most of their high quality group homes will meet the new licensing standard of STRTC and they will continue to exist as STRTC; instead of group homes. Within the new licensing standard, the group homes must have mental health certification or be able to provide those mental health services. They also have to be able to meet the core services to be nationally accredited. Ms. Abrams added that youth population served by STRTC will be specified such as youth in Probation, youth that are victims of commercialized sexual exploitation, and youth with severe mental health needs. There is a placeholder in the Legislation for Probation youth because for them, level 14 is the least restrictive placement. There will be a stakeholder process for Probation. There are longer implementation timelines for Probation youth.**

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Schwartz stated that there could be things built into the RFA process, such as upfront assistance to bridge the gap while families are seeking to be approved where they would otherwise be without any funding.

Mr. Browning noted that Orange County will be starting RFA in two weeks. Los Angeles County staff has been participating in the South County Workgroup. The review of the pilot indicated that a number of things were not considered, such as who pays for TB testing. Mr. Browning states this will help other large jurisdictions. Smaller jurisdictions did not raise issues. Mr. Browning asked DCFS staff if they can start RFA in July 2016 to get a head start; assuming they will learn something from Orange County. DCFS has some work groups in place and it is part of their Strategic Plan Initiative. Mr. Browning mentioned this may be discussed as part of the relative caregiver response to the Board motion.

Ms. Matthews mentioned that there are a few things that could be revised in the statute; interim funding and the way the statute is being implemented

and interpreted by CDSS. In pilot counties there were written directives which are sub-regulatory guidance that spells out how CDSS thinks RFA should be implemented. Their coalition has gone through the directives and mentioned to the State Agency that the way the statute is being read is harder than it needs to be and provided suggestions on how to streamline it.

Ms. Abrams stated that it is not the intent of the legislation to lose relatives and they are working on ways to avoid this. Some pilot counties recognize the issue and provided child care and upfront funding to the relative and this has worked well. In some counties they hardly approved any relatives using RFA process. They have children lingering on the Probation side and Juvenile Halls because they cannot get approved. Ms. Abrams states that the Counties should be concerned and work together on how to revise the directives of the legislation.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Matthews confirmed that the timeline for a relative to be approved through the RFA process is 90 days. Ms. Abrams stated that there is no funding unless the relative applies for CalWORKS. AB403 allows the County to expedite the process and get CalWORKS in place on behalf of the child.

Furthermore, Ms. Schwartz stated that the Step Up Coalition is the entity that's been involved with Alliance for Children's Rights. They are part of the community coalition and receive all communications, but Ms. Schwartz is unsure if the kinship groups in less organized counties are involved in the process. FFA and group homes have been actively participating in every CCR meeting. There has been a lack of relative participation in CCR discussions. Ms. Schwartz states it is more difficult to get a relative to participate in a policy discussion than it is to get someone who represents a group home and FFA provider. Relatives do not have the time to engage in the process and Step Up is trying to be their voice. Ms. Abram added that it is difficult to understand the process and how they are being rolled out when these meetings are happening at the State level. Ms. Schwartz stated that this is part of the reason for having a work group in Los Angeles County, making it accessible.

In response to questions posed by Xiomara Flores-Holguin, DCFS, Ms. Matthews confirmed all current caregivers will have to convert to RFA so there will need to be materials written in terms that anyone can understand and will need to be made available in other languages.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Schwartz stated that FFAs are staying active in recruiting for their own families and will no longer certify, but "approve" and will continue to perform their function. The statute states that the county has an option to utilize FFA, not just to serve the families that they have approved, but to serve families in the community including relatives. Ms. Schwartz mentioned that it is a County level decision of how FFAs are used so that everyone will have access to the services needed. Ms. Schwartz' group has been advocating for all services to be attached to the child and the goal is to have all the families and relatives to have the added value.

Additionally, Ms. Schwartz confirmed that the five pilot counties are San Francisco, Santa Clara, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Kings County. These are smaller counties with different demographics and have not utilized RFA for very long and is still very early in the process. Ms. Schwartz noted that it would be helpful to families if training and child care were provided to the families during visits.
Ms. Matthews briefly discussed the following Bills:

- **AB388 – Crossover Youth:**
  - **Passed in 2014 and implemented in 2016. Rules and guidance to be out soon;**
  - **It is intended to encourage group homes to reduce their frequent contact with law enforcement. Not every incident needs law enforcement involvement; and**
  - **Once a foster youth is detained, they are more likely to stay in Juvenile Hall. The Bill sets new standard that the court cannot detain someone just because they are a foster youth.**

- **AB379 - Education for Foster Youth:**
  - **All rights that foster youth have are enforced through the Uniform Complaint Procedure;**
  - **AB854 – Foster Youth Services renamed to Foster Youth Services Coordinating Programs;**
  - **Not going to provide direct services to youth since Districts are supposed to be doing so; and**
  - **Restructuring the Los Angeles County Office of Education role in education.**

Ms. Abrams briefly discussed the following Bills:

- **SB238, SB319, SB484 and SB253 – Psychotropic Meds**
  - **A package of four bills. The first three bills have passed and SB253 was converted into a two year bill;**

    - **SB238: Requires a process for certain individuals to give their input on requests for psychotropic meds. The State had to create a form for the process. It authorizes the State to distribute a monthly report to each county about each child prescribed psychotropic meds paid for by Medi-Cal. It also mandates the State to create a mandated training for social workers, judges and caregivers in regards to psychotropic meds.**

    - **SB319: Authorizes public health nurses to monitor use of psychotropic meds and requires training for public health nurses. It allows public health nurses access to privileged information such as a child's use of psychotropic meds.**

    - **SB484: Mandates the State to create a system to monitor the use of psychotropic meds in group homes and to have a performance standard of outcome measures for group homes.**

- **SB794 – Child Welfare Services:**
  - **CSEC Provisions – The County has to identify, determine, and document appropriate services for victims of commercialized sexual exploitation. It mandates the County to come up with a process for when a youth goes missing. It also mandates data collection.**

  - **Permanency Provisions – Removes "long-term foster care" as a permanent plan option for youth under 16 years of age. Must have Another Planned Permanent Living Plan (APPLA). It mandates social workers to provide more services to help youth in APPLA going into permanent living situation.**

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Abrams stated that enforcement of these bills has to do with the court's process and findings. This is a new obligation on the County to provide specific services to youth in these situations so that they are more likely to enter a permanent plan. Ms. Abrams noted that the intent of the legislation is to provide intensive services, but does not list what they are. AB519, which turned into a two year bill, would specify what these services would entail.

Vice Chair Smith thanked the presenters for the informative presentation and would like to formally invite them to return for upcoming legislation.

Ms. Abrams stated that they would have a better idea of what bills are moving by late February to early March 2016.

8. Overview of the Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office (CEO) Intergovernmental and External Relations (IGEA) Section

· Olyvia Rodriguez, CEO-IGEA (16-0045)

Olyvia Rodriguez, Chief Executive Office, Intergovernmental and External Relations (IGEA) section, provided an overview of the County's Legislative involvement and process. Ms. Rodriguez added the following:

- **The IGEA section provides a larger and a more in depth training on the Legislative process in the fall and encouraged all to attend;**
- **It serves as the focal point in coordinating the County's legislative policy and strategy and works in collaboration with all Departments, Commissions and Board Offices to develop positions that impact state, federal and budget legislation; legislative proposals are analyzed throughout the year with full reliance on Departments deemed as technical experts to provide an outline on the potential impact;**
- **The County has advocates in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. offices, to provide support for legislation the County is interested in pursuing; an annual memo regarding the development of County positions on legislation and state budget items was provided to the Commissioners;**
- **Explained that responses to time sensitive legislation can be expedited via Board motions or Board letters;**
- **All County departments work in collaboration with the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) and other agencies on legislation related to the welfare of children; and**
- **A component of the Governor's budget provides funding of $95 Million statewide of which $60.9 million is state general funding for the implementation of the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) and Assembly Bill 403 (AB 403); The IGEA section will be working in collaboration with all departments to closely monitor the implementation of AB 403 and identify additional necessities.**

Vice Chair McCroskey thanked Ms. Rodriguez for all the support the section has provided.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Rodriguez responded as follows:

- **Martha Guerrero is the key advocate in the Sacramento office. When the Board of Supervisors takes an interest or position on legislation the advocates can send letters, provide testimonies and negotiations;**
- **The IGEA section works on County sponsored legislation at the State level;**
- **Clarified that the Commission can advise the Board of Supervisors on a position for legislation or budget legislation; supporting the County on a position is not prohibited but encouraged; and**
- **To ensure fair–minded input is provided, information prior to the adoption of legislation is available to all Departments.**

Ms. Rodriguez encouraged the Commission to designate a key person to track legislation.

Vice Chair McCroskey added, that the Policy Roundtable has designated staff to track legislation and work in collaboration with the IGEA section.

Commissioner Curry added, that in the past the Commission has written letters to the Board of Supervisors and advocated for positions in legislation.
Commissioner Cooper expressed concern regarding the adoption of legislation and not having sufficient time to provide information on the impact.

IV. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

9. Discussion and Possible Action on the Commission's Role in Legislative Advocacy. (16-0046)

Chair Kang provided an overview on the importance of the Commission's role in legislative advocacy and opened it up for discussion.

Commissioner Curry added that organizations such as First 5 L.A. and the California Youth Connection (CYC) have a lobbyist who closely monitor

and sponsor legislation and have a greater impact. A previous Commissioner, Beth Lowe, was a dedicated legislation advocate; however, since her departure the practice was no longer continued.

Chair Kang asked Commissioner Garen to take the role as lead for the Commission's Legislative Committee. Commissioner Garen indicated that due to her involvement in other duties she is willing to co-lead the committee.

Commissioners McCroskey, Cooper, Garen, and Smith expressed interest in being part of the committee.

Attachments: SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

10. Discussion and Approval of the Commission for Children & Families 2014-15 Annual Report. (16-0047)

On motion of Commissioner Garen, seconded by Vice Chair Smith (Commissioners Brenes, Konigar-Macklin and Seipel being absent), this item was approved.

Attachments: SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

V. MISCELLANEOUS

11. Announcements. (16-0048)

There were no announcements presented.

12. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (16-0049)

There were no matters presented.

13. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on item(s) of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (16-0050)

No members of the public addressed the Commission on this item.

14. Adjournment. (16-0051)

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.