



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Child and Family Strengthening
Advisory Board
Minutes of May 14, 2021

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

NORA VARGAS
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

NATHAN FLETCHER
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

Members Present:

Supervisor Nora Vargas, County Board of Supervisors
Alethea Arguilez, First 5 San Diego
Crystal Irving, Child Welfare Services, Protective Services
Carolyn Griesemer, Children's Legal Services of San Diego
Stephen Moore, Voices for Children, Inc.
Jessica Heldman,
Cheryl Rode, San Diego Center for Children
Kimberly Giardina, Child Welfare Services
Dean Arabatzis, County Health and Human Service Agency
Maddy Kilkenny, District 5 Appointee
Melissa Villagomez, Former Foster Youth
Simone Hidds-Monroe, San Pasqual Academy
Patty Boles, Straight from the Heart, Inc.
Adam Reed, Dependency Legal Services
Sade Burrell, Former Foster Youth
Joy Singleton, District 3 Appointee
Judge Ana España, Juvenile Court

Members Not Present:

Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, County Board of Supervisors
Dr. Paul Gothold, San Diego County Office of Education
Armand King, Paving Great Futures
Scott Huizar, County Probation Department

Staff Present:

Stephanie Gioia, Supervisor Nathan Fletcher's Office
Ruth Martin, Supervisor Nora Vargas' Office
Kyle Sand, County Counsel
Sandra McBrayer, The Children's Initiative
Jocelyn Nuñez, County Health and Human Services Agency
Kayla Iliff, County Department of Human Resource

1) Welcome and Introduction

- Supervisor Vargas brought the meeting to order at 9:00 am and Sandra McBrayer conducted roll call for the Advisory Board.

2) Public Comment

- Supervisor Vargas asked if any of the public members wished to address the Advisory Board.
- Written Public comment:
 - There was one public comment submitted prior to the start of the meeting. Parents who currently have supervised visits have to wear mask. They are not allowed to kiss their children. Mask must stay on unless you are eating. Now that things in the county are opening up, what is the current Child Welfare Services policy on mask wearing for parents who have supervised visits? Can mask be taken off in supervised visits if parent have been screened for COVID questions and temperature checked? It has been over a year and parents are only being allowed to kiss their children wearing masks. When will this practice end of mask at supervised visits for families?
 - The questions were referred to public health for a formal response.
 - A member of the public addressed the board advocating for therapeutic childcare in all substance use disorder (SUD) perinatal programs.

3) San Pasqual Academy

- Supervisor Vargas introduced the agenda item and turned it over to Kimberly Giardina to provide an update.
 - CWS sought authority from the Board of Supervisors on March 16th to request

an extension from the California Department of Social Services to allow San Pasqual Academy (SPA) to operate until June 30, 2022.

- On March 24th the request was submitted to the California Department of Social Services.
- May 3, 2021 CWS received a response that the extension was granted and with four new requirements.
 1. No new placements can be made
 2. Child and Family Team meetings for youth will need to continue for placement planning
 3. A third-party independent evaluator will need to assess the needs of the youth and stakeholders.
 4. The County of San Diego will need to report updates to the California Department of Social Services every two weeks.
- CWS has until May 28th to provide a response to the State. If they choose not to opt in, the original deadline of October 1, 2021 will go into effect regarding the operations of SPA.
- Supervisor Vargas opened the item to public comment.
 - One member of the public shared opposing views with the recent proposal. They stated that they believe we need to remind the state that there is a shortage of foster homes. They that they feel kids are being retraumatized as they were told SPA would be their last placement. The member of the public advocated to the Advisory Board that SPA should stay open to help kids and siblings.
- Supervisor Vargas requested any other comments from members of the Advisory Board.
 - A member of the Advisory asked if there is further guidance on the 3rd party evaluator. Kim replied that the State was not specific on what the expectation was for the evaluator besides evaluating stakeholder groups on what is best for the youth.
 - A member of the Advisory mentioned it is important to not cause any additional trauma to the students of SPA.
 - Kim shared CWS is analyzing the impact of that new guidance and if the extension is accepted, no new youth can be placed at SPA. If we reject this idea, SPA will close Oct. 1, 2021.
 - A member of the Advisory shared there are 70 youth on campus now. Graduation on June 11th will reduce the number to approximately 60 youth. She stated that she acknowledges that we must respond to the State by May 28th but that there are currently students pending placement at SPA ahead of that May deadline with the understanding that it may be a temporary placement. Even if we accept the extension, SPA will need to shut down before the June 2022 date because of the small number of students at the school (sports require a certain number, classrooms need at least 15 students per class).
 - Kim shared they are making sure that youth have a great experience while they are at SPA. SPA is their school of origin so if the student chooses to continue their education with SPA, they can do so.
 - A member of the Advisory mentioned that they have been informed that after 10/1 there will not be Title IV-E funds to support SPA regardless of the extension. The cost would need to be absorbed by the County. Kim confirmed that to be true.
- Sandra McBrayer stated there is no more public comment and concluded item 3.

4) Update on the Foster Youth Subcommittee – May 13, 2021

- Supervisor Vargas introduced the agenda item asked Simone Hidds-Monroe to provide an update.
 - Simone shared the below updates:
 - 40 attendees were present at the May 13th meeting. Attendees included current and former foster youth. Simone thanked the Advisory members that attended and for continuing to hold space for the foster youth and alumni voice and input. Simone shared

that a survey was sent out to current and former foster youths to select a name for the subcommittee. 104 responses to the survey were received for the selection of the name and Foster Alumni and Youth Community Empowerment Subcommittee (FAYCES). Simone let everyone know that this is really a national movement to include foster youth and alumni in these conversations and for them to be recognized as a formal subcommittee in San Diego County is a great step in the right direction of the movement. Simone then discussed an additional survey is being created to gather information about youths' journey to SPA, their experience there, and the impact of SPA after they left SPA. The focus of the survey is to ask questions of what tools did youth utilize on campus, what they needed and what do they feel was missing. Other questions include what foster youth and alumni need to feel cared for, supported and successful in care and after. Once the survey is completed it will be sent out through community partners.

- Supervisor Vargas called for any public comment on this item.
 - No public comment was requested.

- Supervisor Vargas requested any comments from members of the Advisory Board.
 - A member of the Advisory asked was the survey going to go to those who applied for SPA but were not admitted. Simone stated that it is not currently discussed but is a valuable piece to consider. Sandra states that we are working on the legal aspects of reaching out to current foster youth (getting names and emails of those youth). She is urging all members to spread the word to foster youth to take the survey when it is available and to join the subcommittee. Sandra mentioned that in previous subcommittee meetings an incentive was discussed to get the youth to take the survey. There was talk of a pop-up event or a monetary incentive.
 - A member of the Advisory suggested reaching out to the Association of Foster Family Agency (AFFA) as it might be a good place to recruit youth in foster homes.
 - A member of the Advisory suggested to host the survey on a website as it may be easier to get more people to take the survey. The member also suggested to make the survey anonymous.
 - Supervisor Vargas offered her offices support to distribute the survey and inquired if it was in other languages. Simone stated that it is currently only in English, but interested in other languages with interpreting assistance.

5) Presentation: Family Support Liaison Program – Jewish Family Services

- Supervisor Vargas introduced the agenda item and turned it over to Kim Giardina.
 - Kim provided a brief overview of Jewish Family Services. Jewish Family Services is contracted for the Family Support Liaison program that engages African American families and refugee/immigrants communities around San Diego County.
 - Kim then introduced Kasey Owens and Tanya Parson, both Family Support Supervisors at Jewish Family Services to provide an overview.
 - Kasey and Tanya provided the below overview:
 - Jewish Family Services has been around 100 years and open to all people of faiths, background, and communities. Providing case management, parenting, food delivery, transportation, and the newest service Family Support Liaison Program (FSLP).
 - The goal of FSLP is focused on reducing disproportionality of African American and Black families, as well as immigrant and refugee families involved with CWS. It utilizes C.A.R.E.S. Coordination, Advocacy, Resources, Education, and Support. Developed at the National Center for Innovation and Excellence in Brevard County Florida. Works with formal and informal support who will assist families in their child welfare plans as well as goals that the families identify.
 - They are currently looking to fill vacancies for 2 family support specialists and 1 male parent partner.
 - Program Highlights: Will be serving families County-wide, currently only accepting referrals from CWS, they are 90-day programs, but will be a case by case basis. In that 90 days they will meet with families at least 6 times in person.
 - FSLP is a comprehensive program model consisting of strengths, needs and cultural

- discovery. Teams of formal and informal supports, referrals and linkages, family visions and goals, and assistance with things like transportation, food, and diapers.
- Half of the FSLP team has received the C.A.R.E.S training and the other half will receive the training in June. Currently they are piloting the program in Central Region and will later expand to cover all 6 regions.
- Supervisor Vargas asked if there were any comments from the public.
 - One member of the public asked where the office will be located and wants to know if it will be in Southeastern San Diego. Kasey shared there will not be an office in every region, but JFS will go to wherever the family is located. The member of the public then asked what the turnaround time is once a referral is received and how will JFS respond to crisis. JFS stated they will be reaching out the member of the public directly to answer her questions further.
 - Supervisor Vargas asked if there were any comments from the Advisory board.
 - A member of the Advisory looks forward to working together to share resources and spaces where staff can be in various spaces.
 - An Advisory member asked if the parent partners are mandated reporters. Kasey confirmed that they are.
 - A member of the Advisory asked if JFS is able to assist with negotiating the legalities of the system. Kasey stated JFS is working with CWS in order to make sure that families know about what assistance is available and JFS supports families in navigating the CWS system.
 - A member of the Advisory asked to see the number of males on staff because the father figures are often left out and stated the Quality Parenting Initiative could be a good opportunity to get the word out to social workers and resources parents.
 - A member of the Advisory asked, how this program will be differentiated to the other wrap around programs in San Diego. JFS programs are Wrap Works, they serve families in Child Welfare and Behavioral Health and Probation. Families Forward serves youths with Medi-Cal.
 - A member of the Advisory asked if they are working with active CWS/CPS cases. Kasey shared they are working with prevention, dependency and voluntary cases.

6) COVID-19 Update

- Supervisor Vargas introduced the agenda item and began the update.
 - Supervisor Vargas provided the below updates:
 - As of May 12th, children between the ages of 12-15 can receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Parental consent is required for anyone under the age of 18. It is recommended to schedule an appointment using Myturn.ca.gov so that you can get the consent done in advance. There are 175,864 children in the 12-15 age group in San Diego county and Supervisor Vargas stated that there are enough doses on hand or will be getting more in the coming weeks to vaccinate all eligible youth. The County of San Diego is currently working to partner with schools to make it easy for students and parents to get the vaccine. There are now night hours at Oceanside, Chula Vista, and El Cajon locations. They are open from 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm to get the shot after work with walk-ins or appointments. The County is working to do more mobile sites and members can go to the County website to request that a local area get a mobile site. Supervisor Vargas stated that the County is always open to recommendations so that everyone has access to get the vaccine.
- Supervisor Vargas called for public comment on this item.
 - A member of the public asked what the policy is on getting consent for a minor if the parents are divorced. Do both parents have to sign off or is it sufficient for one parent's consent? Supervisor Vargas shared the current policy is to have one parent or guardian is with the minor when receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and asked staff to follow up with additional requirements.

- Supervisor Vargas requested any other comments from members of the Advisory Board.
 - A member of the Advisory asked is there a plan to expand to children younger than 12? Supervisor Vargas noted there is a lot of research is being done by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to expand vaccine age groups when safe.
 - A member of the Advisory asked if extended vaccine hours will be expanded to all regions of San Diego County. Supervisor Vargas shared the current locations are pilot sites with the hopes to expand and utilize the mobile units to meet people where they are.

7) Child Welfare Services, Director's Report

- Supervisor Vargas asked Alfredo Guardado to provide a Directors Report as Kim had to attend a budget meeting.
 - Alfredo reviewed the CWS Operational Plan which included:
 - The CWS budget will increase by 15.4 million dollars.
 - 8 million of the 15.4-million-dollar increase is attributed to negotiated salary and benefits increases.
 - CWS is proposing 38 new positions and enhancing resources to strengthen families.
- Supervisor Vargas called for any public comment on this item.
 - One member of the public asked if the budget included a focus on prevention and strengthening families. Alfredo shared CWS is working on placement integration and working on expanding Family Support Prevention to the whole county. CWS is also working on hiring a Program Coordinator to work with families of color and to expand diversity and inclusion in CWS.
- Supervisor Vargas requested comments from members of the Advisory Board.
 - One member of the Advisory asked if CWS has done community resource mapping to identify available placement for teens and siblings? Sandra suggested that we have a presentation on available placement at future Advisory board meeting.
 - One member of the Advisory asked what the breakdown is of the 38 new positions they are proposing. Alfredo shared the positions are Social Workers, Office Assistants, Policy Analyst, and Protective Services Workers.
 - An Advisory member asked what the County of San Diego is doing to recruit former foster youth for these open positions. Alfredo shared CWS works with local universities to promote open positions. Supervisor Vargas recommended that CWS connect with individuals on the call to recruit former foster youth.

8) Advisory Board Member Updates

- Supervisor Vargas opened the floor to members with updates.
 - There were no member updates.

9) Adjournment

- Supervisor Vargas closed the meeting and reminded attendees the next meeting will be on Friday, July 9th from 9:00 am – 11:00 am.

Next Meeting:

- July 9, 2021

Distributed:

- Meeting Agenda
- Family Support Liaison Program Presentation

Meeting minutes were submitted by Jocelyn Nunez. Please call Jocelyn Nunez at (619) 550-8815 if you have corrections or suggested revisions. She may also be contacted for agenda items or general information.

