



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board

Summary of Subcommittee Meeting

Subcommittee:

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| Foster Alumni and Youth Community Empowerment Subcommittee (FAYCES) | 6:00 -7:30 pm |
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Date: Thursday, October 20, 2022

Location: Virtual via Zoom

Facilitator: Stephanie Heying

Meeting Staff: Emily Lay

Foster Alumni and Youth Community Empowerment Subcommittee Summary:

32 attendees took part in the Subcommittee.

Advisory Members Participating: Carolyn Griesemer, Simone Hidds-Monroe

Stephanie Heying opened the meeting and recapped that the meeting is a subcommittee of the larger Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board. Stephanie reviewed how the meeting was being conducted via the Zoom platform and provided attendees multiple ways to ask questions. Stephanie encouraged participation via the chat and raise your hand feature. She also reminded current foster youth to turn off their camera for confidentiality purposes. Stephanie then turned it over to Simone Hidds-Monroe, who reviewed the goals of FAYCES.

Child Welfare Services System Improvement Plan (SIP)

Stephanie opened the item and turned it over to Jennifer James of Harder and Company, Nikki Kelsay of Child Welfare Services (CWS), Delona King of San Diego Probation, and Simone Hidds-Monroe. Jennifer gave an overview of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), the California Child and Family Services Review (CA-CFSR), and the County Self-Assessment (CSA).

- Simone shared that FAYCES was an active participant in the CSA, specifically in the community forum and focus group steps.

Jennifer then gave an overview of the CA-CFSR process, including the SIP. She shared results of the CSA, with a focus on increasing permanency in 12 months from both CWS and Probation.

- Simone asked if the CWS data presented shows that the federal standard is 30% of children in foster care or youth involved with CWS will result in permanency in 12 months. Jennifer clarified that the federal standard is 40.5%.
- A participant asked for clarification on what type of placement is considered permanent. Nikki clarified that any child or youth that has reunified or achieved permanency through guardianship or adoption is considered permanent placement. She stated the reentry rate is tracked separately and not considered in this data.

Jennifer shared observations of the peer review, focusing on themes that are both strengths and challenges within Probation and CWS, including but not limited to Social Workers and Probation Officers (POs) are generally well trained, skilled at tools and engagement, and use a variety of

assessments/support plans.

- A participant asked for clarification on the definitions and roles of Emergency Response (ER), Court Intervention (CI), and Continuing Support (CS) social workers. Nikki explained ERs investigate referrals, CIs walk youth through the court system, and CSs help work on reunification between youth and parents.

Jennifer then gave an overview of themes commonly listed during the system partner/community-based organizations forums, focusing on themes that work well and themes that need improvement. Ashlyn shared feedback and recommendations from several focus groups, with a focus on resource families, tribal partners, and parents. She shared common themes from the focus groups, including but not limited to a preference for one case worker to follow the case from beginning to end and a lack of services/resources available. Simone shared feedback and recommendations from the foster youth focus group, which closely aligned with the feedback from the other focus groups. She reiterated that transparency, accessibility, and clear communication are key to helping CWS, Probation, and resource families work together to provide the best outcome for each youth.

- A participant shared that the bureaucratic nature of CWS and Probation make it difficult for resource families and others to assist youth in their care.

Jennifer then gave an overview of the SIP areas of focus for San Diego County. She explained the performance outcome would focus on permanency in 12 months, while the systemic factor would focus on service array and resource development. Delona further explained the strategies for Probation, clarifying what current efforts are in place to support SIP strategies, such as increased utilization of the Interagency Placement Committee/recertifications, increased collaboration with the Child and Family Team, and placement matching. Nikki explained the feedback from the CSA greatly influenced the CWS strategies. She shared CWS plans to increase permanency in 12 months by improving parent/child interactions and strengthening social work engagement; CWS also plans to increase prevention services and implement a Prevention Hub in order to improve service array and resource development.

- A participant shared that the CWS strategies are broad, but many FAYCES members would be willing to assist in discussing recommendations to improve these focus areas.

Update on SPA

Stephanie opened the item and turned it over to Valesha Bullock. Valesha shared that Rite of Passage has officially been selected as the new provider for San Pasqual Academy (SPA). She shared concerns from youth currently on campus that a switch in providers could negatively impact their day-to-day activities. Valesha mentioned Rite of Passage has begun to meet with collaborative partners, including court partners and partners on campus. She stated Rite of Passage still needs to obtain licensure in order to operate SPA, but that the documentation has been submitted.

- A participant emphasized the original goal of FAYCES was to be able to partner with CWS and other entities that may have influence over SPA as decision-making partners. He recommended that FAYCES members be invited to participate whenever CWS meets with current youth on campus and reiterated that FAYCES are decision-making partners. He mentioned that a conflicting message coming from CWS and FAYCES can cause distrust from current SPA youth.
- Simone shared FAYCES and SPA alumni should be the first line of communication with current SPA youth. She shared concerns that Rite of Passage has already been to the campus, but that they have not met with alumni or FAYCES. She requested that any presentation given by Rite of Passage is presented to FAYCES before the end of October. Valesha shared that a meet and greet occurred with Rite of Passage and the current operators of SPA. Rite of Passage was given a very brief tour of SPA but were not permitted to interact with any youth or New Alternatives staff. She stated she would collaborate with Rite of Passage to coordinate a date for a meet and greet with FAYCES.
- Carolyn Griesemer asked whether the current SPA youth and SPA alumni will be able to provide feedback to Rite of Passage for the new vision of SPA. Valesha responded that the goal is to have

current SPA youth and alumni, but the process is just beginning, so that has not been scheduled yet.

- Simone asked for an update on when FAYCES will be able to go to SPA to connect with the current youth. She asked for a timeline on when FAYCES can expect dates to visit the campus. She expressed concern that the current youth and alumni are not being prioritized in the conversation. Valesha responded that there is no update, but she will follow up to see when a date can be selected. She agreed that the current youth are a priority and shared that both New Alternatives and Rite of Passage has expressed interest in keeping the current youth and alumni involved.
- Carolyn Griesemer asked for a copy of the SPA Student Experience Survey to be able to view the survey from a trauma-informed lens. She suggested that it might be easier to bring the current youth voice and alumni voice to Rite of Passage by partnering with CWS and Children's Legal Services to disseminate the survey.
- A participant asked for additional context on trauma-informed survey questions. Carolyn stated questions developed over a year ago were asking about a hypothetical change at SPA, whereas the current youth are going through a transition at SPA. She suggested a fresh look at the survey questions could be helpful in gathering information relevant to what current youth and alumni are feeling today.
- Simone commented that the survey has evolved with the transition of Rite of Passage. She responded that the survey is current and relevant to the experience current youth are having on campus and was designed for current youth and alumni to have a voice in what does and does not work on campus.
- A participant was unclear why FAYCES are not allowed at SPA, as many FAYCES members are alumni of SPA. She stated that as an alumnus, she is free to go to campus and interact with youth, but there is a disconnect between why FAYCES members cannot visit the campus.

Update on SPA Student Experience Survey

Agenda item was moved to the December meeting due to time limitations.

FAYCES 2022 Priorities Discussion

Agenda item was moved to the December meeting due to time limitations.

Date of Next Meeting – December 15, 2022