

The mission of MCWAP is to assure that the state system is meeting the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families through assessment, research, advocacy, and greater citizen involvement. Our goal is to promote child safety and quality services for children, youth, and families.

Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel

October 4, 2024; 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Co-Chairs: Ahmen Cabral; Andrea Mancuso

Panel Coordinator: Jenna Joeckel

Minutes

9:30 a.m. - Welcome and Introductions:

Attendance: Andrea Mancuso, Ahmen Cabral, Jenna Joeckel, Senator Donna Bailey, Ashley Perry, Craig Smith, Erika Simonson, Kelly Dell'Aquila, Molly Owens, Maura Keaveney, Christina Alberi, Taylor Kilgore, Chelsea Peters, Beth Gagnon, Melissa Hackett, Kathryn Rice, Julie Smyth, Jean Haynes, Betsy Boardman, Heidie Aakjer, Julian Richter, Esther Anne, Michelle Westbrook, Melissa Martin

Opening Statement:

Members shared the opening statement

We are a federally mandated group of professionals and private citizens who are responsible for determining whether state and local agencies are effectively discharging child protective and child welfare responsibilities. The mission of the panel is to assure that the state system is meeting the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families through assessment, research, advocacy, and greater citizen involvement. Each of us brings to this table a different set of experiences and opinions. Every voice is valued, and all perspectives are needed. Our shared goal is to promote child safety and quality services for children, youth, and families. This is the task to which we continually commit ourselves, and we hold our relationships in trust.

Members participated in a review of the Panel Values Statement and the Federal Mandates.

9:10 a.m. – MCWAP Housekeeping:

Member Chelsea Peters has accepted a new professional role and announced that she will be leaving the panel.

The panel voted on and approved the September minutes.

An alternative MCWAP meeting schedule was proposed for MCWAP meeting to include holding meetings in February, March, June, September, October, and November. The intention of the new schedule is to support the subcommittee work that is taking place outside of the monthly Panel meeting and to account for the fact that subcommittees are engaging in much deeper discussion than is happening in the full panel meetings.

Federal mandated require the Panel to meet quarterly. An electronic vote will be sent to Panel members after the meeting.

Members were invited to provide feedback about the annual MCWAP meeting that took place in September.

9:30 a.m. Recommendation Discussion:

Members were given the opportunity to review and ask questions about updates to subcommittee recommendations that were made by subcommittees in response to the discussion about substance of the recommendations that took place at the full day annual meeting in September. The Panel Coordinator will send all finalized recommendations out for electronic vote in the next few weeks. Panel members were reminded not to engage in substantive discussion about recommendations via email. Questions can be directed to subcommittee coordinators.

A future Panel agenda item for the November MCWAP meeting will include a discussion about prior recommendations that the Panel has made.

A future Panel agenda item for the November MCWAP meeting will include a summary of the Parent and Provider Surveys.

10:00 a.m. OCFS Updates:

Jean Haynes, Associate Director of Child Welfare Services with the Office of Child and family Services (OCFS) provided OCFS Updates to the panel. Updates included information about decreased staff vacancies, recent trainings and presentations that have taken place, ongoing partnership with collaborative safety, and the exploration of the permanency paperwork process. A suggestion was made by panel members to add a check in process for permanency paperwork.

Members requested additional information from the trainings and presentations, to include the data that was shared by Casey in the September stakeholders convening that was coordinated by Casey and OCFS. Information provided by the surgeon general can be found here:

<https://mainemorningstar.com/2024/09/27/u-s-surgeon-general-urges-mainers-to-prioritize-social-connection/>

<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2024/08/28/us-surgeon-general-issues-advisory-mental-health-well-being-parents.html>.

The Panel adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Next Panel Meeting: November 1, 2024, 9 a.m. – 11a.m.