

MEETING MINUTES

**Act 264 Advisory Board/Children’s SPSC Joint Meeting
December 16, 2022**

FINAL

Act 264 Advisory Board Meeting (9:30 – 10:30)		
Members present: Cinn Smith, Heather Freeman, Alice Maynard, Megean Martin		
Guests: Joanne Crawford – DMH, Puja Senning – DMH, Liana Redmond – Spectrum, Ron Bos Lun, Steve DeVoe – DMH, Cheryle Wilcox – DMH, Joe Brusatto, Laurie Mulhern, Ward Nial, Eva Dayon - DMH		
Agenda Items	Discussion Points	Decisions/Actions
Cheryle Wilcox – System of Care Report	Cheryle shared with the group data regarding the number of CSPs last year and this year. Cheryle shared the Data Trend Over Time Chart which shows the acuity of need with Vermont’s children. She also shared a chart showing the number of vacancies in mental health positions in Vermont and a chart showing the number of turnovers by service.	Cheryle will share a link to the full data report from DCF and a Workforce Plan with this group.
Review 2023 System of Care Recommendations Updated Version	The group reviewed their draft recommendations document and made final edits. Alice made a motion to adopt them as amended. Heather seconded. No discussion. The Vote to adopt was unanimous.	
Training Video	The video is ready for use.	
Discussion of the <i>Broken System, Broken Promises</i> report	The group discussed how they will be addressing DCF regarding the report <i>Broken System, Broken Promises</i> report.	
Public Comment:		
Joint Act 264 Advisory Board and State Program Standing Committee Meeting (10:30 – 12:30)		
Members present: Cinn Smith, Ron Bos Lun, Joe Brusatto, Alice Maynard, Laurie Mulhern, Megean Martin, Ward Nial, Doug Norford		
Guests: Joanne Crawford – DMH, Puja Senning – DMH, Steve DeVoe – DMH, Laurel Omland – DMH, Diane Bugbee, Cheryle Wilcox – DMH, Liana Remond, Eva Dayon – DMH, Heather Bouchey – DCF, Aryka Radke - DCF		
Agenda Items	Discussion Points	Decisions/Actions
Review November Minutes	Alice made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Ron seconded. No discussion. All members but one voted to approve the minutes. The one member abstained from the vote.	

January Agenda Planning	Discuss the report regarding the <i>Broken System, Broken Promises</i> report regarding the Department of Children and Families and maybe ask someone who wrote the report to meet with the group. Discussion with Laurel Omland on Mobile Crisis Quality Measures.	
Structure of the two groups when meeting	Most folks felt that the way the two meetings are set up now is working well.	
Public Comment	No public comment.	
Deputy Secretary Bouchey of the Agency of Education	<p>1. When might we expect to see a searchable item for Act 264 and Coordinated Service Plans (CSP) on the Agency of Education’s website? What kind of training are Agency of Education (AOE), Special Education Administrators, and school counselors receiving around CSPs?</p> <p>The Agency of Education (AOE) website is in transition. Heather will make sure she shares the link to the location of the Act 264 information on the AOE website with the group when the work is done. She will also make sure that the Coordinated Service Plan (CSP) information is findable on the website. AOE does not have a training regarding Act 264 training. The superintendents and school boards are required to provide this trainings to new faculty and staff. The agency is working on district quality standards which will mean a district quality assurance process which will address, among other aspects, the Act 264 training.</p> <p>2. What do you know about the local districts spending of the ESSR funds and what improvements have been made to our education system as a result of this influx of funds?</p> <p>A contract was just signed off on to create a dashboard which will show how the ESSR funds were spent and what improvements were made in each district. An entity has been hired to build this dashboard. The public will be able to look at the programs put in place with these funds. Many programs were put in place, but it is too early to know the impact of the improvements.</p>	

	<p>3. In the last year, the Agency of Education (AOE) Secretary French said one of his priorities going forward is better integration with education and social services delivery. We are wondering what he meant more specifically (<i>i.e.</i>, which social services were not well connected). Has this issue improved in any specific situations?</p> <p>The Agency of Education (AOE) wants to make sure students in every region have access to a comprehensive set of supports through local and regional partnerships. There is no one area that is problematic, it is more of asking how we at the state can work together to model that interconnection and to provide supports in an integrated way. Once we see the results of the district quality standards assessment and if folks are struggling, we will have a better understanding of how we can provide support.</p> <p>We had a lot of work happening under the federal supports program linking the 264 and mental health work with a whole new team. AOE has repurposed Building Effective Supports Teaching (BEST) and it is now the Social Emotional Wellness Team.</p> <p>4. What percentage of Vermont schools are implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at different levels (<i>i.e.</i>, elementary, middle, junior high, and senior high schools)?</p> <p>If you look at the link that Laurel has shared, you can find the current PBIS report, which from 2021 and all previous reports.</p> <p>5. Has the situation improved around school attendance and truancy?</p> <p>Statewide, this has not improved. The Agency of Education (AOE) has started working with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) as part of the Children's Justice Taskforce. Need to address chronic absenteeism while we are looking at truancy. Work with local systems to engage around restorative justice.</p>	<p>https://www.uvm.edu/cess/cdci/best-building-effective-supports-teaching</p> <p>https://www.pbisvermont.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/VTPBIS-Annual-Report-2022.pdf</p>
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	<p>Have a state level contract to allow AOE to look at all components with these issues and come up with a solution. We need a structured approach but right now the approach is very fractured and not effective.</p> <p>6. Is there any organized effort at any level of education in Vermont to improve cultural competence for students and staff regarding black Americans and our growing number of immigrants?</p> <p>Yes, through the state regulatory arm. If folks are not aware of the Act 1 Workgroup, Deputy Secretary Bouchey will send a link to the group. This is a cross sector working group that includes parent and student voice. It has worked for the past 3 years, and it is sending recommendations to the state board of education to make sure equity is a critical piece of the standards. This group is going through EQS education level standards and recommendations have been made to assure all people are included. Now hiring a consultant who will help this workgroup to look at the common core standards to also include social justice and equity.</p> <p>There is a process to gather testimony on the first set of recommendations and there is always the possibility of public comment. The contract is just now being finalized for the consultant for the workgroup. Going to the Act 1 website is also a good place to look for information. The meetings are public so anyone can join.</p>	<p>Heather will share information about the Act 1 Workgroup with the group.</p> <p>Heather can send the first set of recommendations to the group.</p>
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<p>Deputy Commissioner Radke of Department of Children and Families</p>	<p>1. What are your top three focus areas in 2023?</p> <p>a. Stabilizing the system of care – The pandemic was hard on our system of care. Right now, we are at only 66% of licensed capacity for residential and state programs. We are struggling to find appropriate placement for many youths. We are trying to get beds back online. We are in the final stages of drafting an RFP for a secure stabilization program for juvenile justice youth. Also looking to do an RFP for a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF). In Windham County, they are looking to stand up a two-bed facility.</p> <p>b. Implementing the Family First Prevention Act</p> <p>c. Maintain and stabilize the work force – Family services workers have been asked to work longer hours and work with children with increasing levels of acuity. Because of the shortage of beds, staff have been out at various settings due to a lack of beds. A workforce development workgroup has been started and they are looking to standardize the hiring manual. Working to boost staff morale.</p> <p>2. When might we expect to see a searchable item for Act 264 and Coordinated Service Plans (CSP) on the Department of Children and Families’ website? What kind of training are DCF workers receiving around CSPs?</p> <p>Looking to use funds to upgrade the website. They are at the final step to getting a new IT system. Once the new system is set up, the upgrade will be able to happen. There are no formal trainings around CSPs. She was thinking that she could bring this training to their Children Welfare Training Partnership. They do training for new social workers, foster parents and career counseling.</p> <p>3. Has DCF seen an increase or decrease in children going into state custody and foster care placements during the pandemic? To what factors do you attribute this? What are your biggest challenges in trying to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of foster care families to meet the need?</p>	<p>The group will send the Act 264 training to Deputy Commissioner Radke when it is complete.</p>
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	<p>There was a decrease of children going into state’s custody during the pandemic. Now after the peak of the pandemic, the numbers have gone back up to what they were prior to the pandemic. Finding foster homes is always difficult, especially for teenagers; they remain the biggest challenge. DCF is trying some different recruitment efforts such social media campaigns, working with different community partners, and more work around finding kinship placements. Also trying to increase funding for foster parents.</p> <p>4. Has any progress been made on the recommendation to create a state database across AHS and AOE to track all in-state and out-of-state residential placements?</p> <p>No, there has been no progress.</p> <p>Laurel Omland let the group know that the Agency of Human Services (AHS) now has some funds to work on an AHS database. It will not include educational placements for residential programs.</p> <p>5. How is DCF working to increase the level of cultural competence within their staff?</p> <p>The Family Services Division (FSD) has a statewide racial equity workgroup which discusses issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion from a policy and practice standpoint. Working on an RFP to hire a consultant to create an [infinity] group within FSD for people of color as well as having [infinity] groups for foster care youth. Just posted an RFP for a Director of Race, Gender, Equity and Sensibility who will report to the Commissioner.</p>	
<p><i>Broken System, Broken Promises Report</i></p>	<p>Let her know that this group will be discussing the report and would like to invite Aryka Radke back. Deputy Commissioner Radke also suggested that Nancy Miller might be a person to invite to the meeting.</p>	
<p>BREAK (12:00 – 12:30)</p>		
<p>State Program Standing Committee (12:30 – 2:00)</p>		
<p>Members present: Joe Brusatto, Ron BosLun, Cinn Smith, Megean Martin, Ward Nial</p>		

Commented [Ma1]: Probably not the right word. Possibly “affinity group”?

Commented [Ma2]: See above comment.

Guests: Joanne Crawford – DMH, Puja Senning – DMH, Jessica Kell – WCMHS, Rachel Lavallee – WCMHS, Mary Moulton – WCMHS, Cindy Tabor – WCMHS Board of Director, Amy Lincoln-Moore – VFFCMH, Heather Slayton – WCMHS, Eva Dayon – DMH, Liam Redmond - Spectrum		
Agenda Items	Discussion Points	Decisions/Actions
WCMHS Agency Designation Question and Answer	The group asked questions of the Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMHS) representatives regarding their agency designation reports.	
C-SPSC Debrief and Designation Recommendation of Next Steps	The group voted unanimously to recommend redesignation with no deficiencies for WCMHS.	
Close/Meeting Adjournment	The meeting adjourned at 1:55.	