

KANSAS CHILDREN’S CABINET AND TRUST FUND MINUTES

The **February 4, 2022**, regular session of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund Board virtual meeting commenced at 9:00 a.m. Chairman Kim Moore presiding. There was a quorum. Proper notice was published in the Kansas Register.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kim Moore, Chair, LeEtta Felter, DiAnne Graham, Deliece Hofen, Monica Murnan, Tyler Smith-Howells, M.D., John Wilson, Tanya Keys (DCF), Carla Whiteside-Hicks (DCF), Amanda Petersen (KSDE), Hope Cooper (DOC/JJ), Karla Wiscombe (KBOR).
Cabinet Staff: Melissa Rooker, Amy Meek, Debbie Deere, and Dyogga Adegbore.

CHAIRMAN’S REMARKS:

Chairman Kim Moore welcomed everyone to the meeting. Chairman Moore announced action on the minutes would be postponed until there was a quorum. He announced the next item would be an update on the budget recommendations.

BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE:

Melissa Rooker, Executive Director gave an update on the status of the CIF budget recommendations that were made at the June 2021 meeting. Melissa discussed the Cabinet’s role and responsibility in making recommendations regarding the combining of funds to achieve coordination of funding and services across departmental lines which allow for better services to families and their children.

Melissa discussed the impact of *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan and its alignment with activities of grant recipient agencies and providers in Kansas’ Early Childhood Care and Education System.

Melissa remarked when the Cabinet made recommendations last June, the following measures were used:

- Streamlined and aligned CIF fund allocations for maximum impact,
- Allocated funds to sustain system infrastructure enhancements implemented through the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan and PDG B-5 renewal grant,
- Enhanced Early Childhood Block Grant investments to serve big initiatives with partner agencies,
- Increased funding for universal home visiting, and
- Added funding for implementation of the Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library statewide.

As a result of the Cabinet’s recommendations, the following CIF budget alignments and enhancements were honored in the Governor’s budget:

- ECBG increased by \$2.36 million dollars and includes CAEDE/Start Young program,

- Maternal & Child Health Home Visiting was increased by \$1.4 million dollars,
- Dolly Parton Imagination Library was approved with a \$500,000 line item in the budget,
- Early Childhood Infrastructure is a new line item approved at \$1.4 million dollars and includes the 1-800-CHILDREN project, Early Childhood Data Trust, and the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) screening tool.
- The Governor's budget reflects a few CIF programs recommended for absorption by other state agency budgets such as the Child Care Quality Initiative, Infant Toddler Hearing Aid Bank, and the Children's Mental Health Waiver.
- With regard to the Cabinet recommendation to follow state statute and fund a transfer from the KEY fund to the CIF equal to 102.5% more, the Governor's Budget includes an increase of 1% for FY23. Melissa remarked that this progress was welcome.
- The CIF Funding Proposal for State Fiscal Year 2023 is \$52,474,070.

John Wilson remarked there was strong bipartisan legislative support for investments in early learning programs and yet legislators should be educated about the child care crisis occurring in the state. There will always be a need for early learning advocates to remind legislature that there are parents that cannot afford to pay more for child care assistance and providers that cannot provide more services for less money.

DiAnne Graham asked Melissa whether more funding will be received from the KEY Fund and transferred into CIF for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. Melissa responded a line item was approved but the final amount will be acted upon by the legislature. LeEtta Felter commended Melissa on her efforts in moving forward the Dolly Parton Imagination Library into the CIF budget.

Chairman Moore asked Melissa for an update on the Master Tobacco Settlement and the long-term prospects since it seems cloudy. Melissa remarked the Kansas Legislative Research provided a report on what is trending concerning the master tobacco settlement. She provided a copy to everyone and a copy will be posted to the Children's Cabinet website. Melissa remarked so far several legislators have been receptive about the recommendations.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 3, 2021 MINUTES:

Chairman Moore announced there was a quorum and asked for a motion on the minutes.

Deliece Hofen moved the Cabinet approve the minutes of December 3, 2021, as written. Motion seconded by LeEtta Felter. Members voted by raised hand or voice vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT UPDATE:

Melissa Rooker briefed the board on the work going in Year 2 and preparation for Year 3 of the PDG grant:

Kansas Future Fellows:

A group of 11 Stars are participating as the Kansas Future Fellows first year cohort. They are both consultants and visionaries supporting the work of the PDG B-5. They met for the first time last September 2021, then again in December and are planning a February meeting. They are planning a Forum scheduled in Topeka on May 19, 2022. New York Times journalist and author, David Bornstein will be the keynote speaker.

Professional Career Pathway and Workforce Registry

Melissa talked about Professional Career Pathway recruitment and retention efforts for early childhood professionals and its connection to the Workforce Registry.

Needs Assessment

A comprehensive Needs Assessment was completed in 2019, and an update was published for 2020 to provide information about the impact of COVID on our early childhood care and education system. Currently data is being collected to compare where we are from pre-Pandemic assessment and now. A 2021 update will be shared when completed.

PDG Year 3 Planning

Scope of work, budget and background information from the various partners have been collected in preparation for PDG Year 3. Approval to carry forward funding from Year 1 was authorized by the feds. The application has been submitted and April 30, 2022 will mark the start of the Year 3 grant year.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Debbie Deere, Early Childhood System Coordinator, KCCTF gave an update. The Early Childhood Recommendations Panel meets Friday's from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. once a month.

Debbie reported on the Early Childhood Governance Summit held January 21, 2022. There were nine governance groups that participated. Each group shared information and the full group discussed ways to continually support the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan and facilitate connections and collaborate.

Debbie reported the Panel's work groups are finalizing recommendations to the Cabinet in its role as the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council. These recommendations will be brought to the Cabinet at the April meeting.

The Early Childhood Recommendations Panel recommended Paula Branizar (KDHE) for appointment to the Early Childhood & Youth Programs work group on the Panel.

Chairman Moore asked for a motion to accept Paula Branizar as a member of the Panel.

Monica Murnan moved the Cabinet accept the appointment of Paula Branizar to the Early Childhood Recommendations Panel. Motion seconded by John Wilson. By unanimous consent of the 7 voting members present, the motion carried.

AGENCY UPDATES:

Amanda Petersen, Director, Early Childhood (KSDE) reported:

- The 2022-2023 Kansas Parents as Teachers Grant Application is now open. KSDE convened a “Think Tank” of Kansas Parents as Teachers stakeholders over the summer to consider the agency decision-making process for awarding grant funds. That group provided valuable feedback and produced a written report documenting its work to date. The agency shared with Kansas Parents as Teachers programs in October that programs may anticipate an identical grant award amount for FY23 as received during FY22, unless there are additional funds for the state grant line-item appropriated in the state budget or unless any current grantees request reductions.
- As shared in December, beginning in the 2021-22 school year 3-year-old preschool-aged at-risk students will be funded in the school finance formula. KSDE is working with school districts to determine whether their programs for 3-year-olds meet program requirements. The program requirements for next year are now available, and districts are now submitting approval forms to operate approved preschool-aged at-risk programs for next school year.
- Districts/private school systems may submit a short survey if they would like to administer the 2022 Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot (Ages & Stages Questionnaires, ASQ) beginning April 1, 2022. Since districts first implemented the Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot statewide in Fall 2018, KSDE has gathered feedback on how to best use this tool to improve kindergarten readiness. Last year KSDE received positive feedback around offering the flexibility to begin partnering with families of incoming kindergarten students to complete the Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot (ASQ) in the springtime prior to children entering kindergarten. For the 2022-23 school year, districts/private school systems may submit a short survey to confirm they will follow certain parameters to administer the ASQ to incoming kindergarteners (for the purposes of the Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot) beginning April 1. For districts that do not submit the short survey, the Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot window will open July 1. All schools must partner with families to complete ASQ for incoming kindergarten students by Sept. 20, 2022.

- School districts and accredited private school systems can now apply for Kansans Can Star Recognition in the areas Kansans have shared that they value, including Kindergarten Readiness. Applications for recognition in 2022 are due June 30, 2022.
- Kansas Education Service Center consultants are facilitating an Early Childhood Professional Learning Community (PLC) during the 2021-2022 school year, sponsored by the Southwest Plains Regional Service Center. Upcoming PLCs are Friday, February 11 and Friday, February 8 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Sessions are free, and there is optional 0.5 graduate-level credit available from Mid-America Nazarene university for \$45 at conclusion of all sessions and completion of an assignment.

Amy Meek, Early Childhood Director, (KCCTF) reported:

- CBCAP Grantee virtual meeting was held January 13, 2022. Grants were given guidance on what to expect for evaluation, data collection, and reporting requirements for this year.
- Technical assistance opportunities through webinars on identifying and addressing disparities and engaging voices that have lived experiences into actions
- Thriving Families and Safer Children program completed Year 1. In Year 2, focus will revolve around creating an equitable child and family well-being system in Kansas.

Kelli Mark, Acting Director, Bureau of Family Health, (KDHE):

- Paula Branizar is the new Early Care & Youth Programs Director. She started her position on December 27, 2021, and we are excited she joined KDHE,
- Kelli said she was happy to be a part of this larger Early Childhood system work happening across Kansas and also helping educate legislators on the work taking place,
- Working on priority regulation changes and moving those through the formal process,
- KDHE has a new online regulation suggestion form. Regulated community can now go in real time online to offer suggested changes.

Melissa welcomed Kelli to the team. Kelli replaced Rachel Sisson as the KDHE designee to the Cabinet. The Cabinet said good bye to Rachel in that role at the February meeting.

Dr. Carla Whiteside-Hicks, Director of TANF and Early Childhood Programs, (DCF) reported:

- DCF is reviewing proposals in response to the family needs and preferences study. That study is intended to assist DCF understand why families are making the childcare decisions they made versus selecting subsidy providers and why they chose unlicensed care. The information will help DCF in long-term planning.
- DCF is working on a third round of Sustainability grants to provide direct financial support for Providers.
- DCF is reviewing current agreements to ascertain whether amendments are needed to enhance existing services.

Dr. Karla Wiscombe, Director, Academic Affairs, (KBOR) reported:

- KBOR is reviewing the Promise Act. Currently legislators are revising it in an effort make improvements. Revisions have passed the senate committee and will be sent to house committee for consideration,
- KBOR is working on a statewide General Education package for all its institutions in an effort to remove barriers to transferring courses. It will take a year or two for implementation to take effect.

Hope Cooper, Department of Corrections and Tanya Keys, Department for Children and Families had to depart the meeting early.

Melissa reported that Justice Keynen Wall, Supreme Court, was not able to join the meeting because of court business. She read his report. Some items were updates since the last meeting.

- Effective January 1, 2022, the Court adopted amendments to Supreme Court Rule 174, which identifies forms required in child in need of care proceedings to comply with federal and state law. The Office of Judicial Administration is developing informational materials to post on our website for those impacted by the rule change.
- Each year OJA prints copies of the CINC and juvenile offender codes for child welfare stakeholders to use. It is a compilation of the statutes and meant to be a quick resource. The books are at the state printer now. The books will be distributed through the CASA programs. For districts without a CASA program, books will be distributed through the CSO office. Copies are also available on the judicial branch child welfare law training page:
 - Child in need of care:
<https://www.kscourts.org/KSCourts/media/KsCourts/Trial%20court%20programs/CIN-C-Code-Book.pdf>
 - Juvenile Justice:
<https://www.kscourts.org/KSCourts/media/KsCourts/Trial%20court%20programs/JO-Code-Book.pdf>
- The Office of Judicial Administration is still working on revisions to the CASA and CRB standards. We anticipate recommended revisions will go to the Court for consideration later this year.
- Twice per year OJA hosts training for child welfare stakeholders (titled “Best Practices in Child Welfare Law”). Here are the topics for 2022:
 - April 19 and 20: Implicit Bias, Reasonable Efforts Findings in child in need of care cases
 - Registration is open. Registration links are available on the child welfare law training page: <https://www.kscourts.org/About-the-Courts/Programs/Child-Welfare-Law-Training>
 - August 23 and 24: Procedural Fairness, Termination of Parental Rights
- Planning for a six-part webinar training series for judges who hear child in need of care cases. The webinars are scheduled for September and October, 2022.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Melissa Rooker reported:

The Children's Cabinet funded a CBCAP grant last fall to the Washburn University Law School. Funding helped a group of law students create a series of videos to help provide CLE training for attorneys and future attorneys in the area of family law. The videos are available and posted to the Cabinet website.

Melissa announced the April 1 and June 3, 2022 Cabinet meetings might run longer than usual to allow additional time for discussion on budget and CIF recommendations for SFY 2024.

OTHER BUSINESS:

John Wilson remarked at the December meeting, the Cabinet approved encouraging the governor and legislature to support issues that help families meet their needs. John provided a highlight of what he has been observing in the legislature. That said, there is legislation in the house under HB 2525 on reducing barriers for parents to access child care assistance and food assistance. Particularly notable is that the bill calls on removal of requirement for child support cooperation in order to become eligible for SNAP and child care assistance. The bill also removes certain work requirements for individual pursuing their education so they can complete their education goals and have more income for their family. The bill passed the House Children and Seniors Committee unanimously recently and goes to the full house for action. John said he planned to meet with the majority leader next week. He added that if any Cabinet members or audience members have strong connections to Rep. Dan Hawkins, to connect with him so that he could share additional details in case anyone would like to meet with Rep. Hawkins too.

John also reported there is another bill, and he did not have the bill number in front of him, that is in the House Juvenile and Corrections Committee that removed the SNAP felony ban for people attempting to access the food assistance program. He said the hearing went well and there is a good chance that bill will pass in the committee. If so, that will be another step for families being able to meet their basic needs.

John also announced there will be five bills in the legislature that will reduce the state's sales tax on food, saving the average family \$500 a year and allowing people to put more of their money towards other basic needs.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled Friday, April 1, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. All meetings are held the first Friday of every other month from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. as virtual meetings until further notice. The meeting dates are April 1, June 3, August 5, October 7, and December 2, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business for discussion, Chairman Moore adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m.