

Steve Sisolak
Governor



Richard Whitley, MS
Director

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.



Cindy Pitlock, DNP
Administrator

Nevada Children's Commission Full Commission Meeting Minutes

DATE: Friday, June 10, 2022

TIME: 10:30 A.M. - Adjournment

VIDEO CONFERENCE:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YjRjM2M1NTAtNmNjOC00NmY1LWE3ZjEtN2M3NTI3NWl1Y2U2%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e4a340e6-b89e-4e68-8eaa-1544d2703980%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22be58909a-421c-4f56-857e-c5f7d4ef6f7f%22%7d

TELECONFERENCE LINE: 775-321-6111

CONFERENCE ID: 501 394 699#

1. **Call to Order** – Justice Nancy Saitta, Justice Elissa Cadish, Dr. Cindy Pitlock
The meeting was called to order at 10:33 a.m. by Justice Nancy Saitta

2. **Welcome and Introductions (Roll Call)**- DCFS Staff

Members Present:

By video: Justice Nancy Saitta, Justice Elissa Cadish, Dr. Cindy Pitlock, Tim Burch, Judge Rebecca Burton, Brigid Duffy, Amber Howell, Dr. Jesus Jara, Zaide Martinez, Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno, Judge Michael Montero, Kimberly Palma-Ortega, Shelia Parks, Xavier Planta (for Janice Wolf), Assemblyman Steve Yeager

Members Absent: Nancy Brune, Judge Paige Dollinger, Megan Miller, Senator Keith Pickard, Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner, Judge William Voy, Judge Egan Walker

DCFS Staff: Elvira Saldana

Public: Annette Dawson Owens, Vanessa Dunn, Morgan Briscoe, Pauline Salla, Linda Anderson, Gabrielle Hackbarth, DeNeese Parker, Jamelle Nance, Jane Saint, Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Ron Murphy, Kim Abbott

3. **Public Comment and Discussion**

Jane Saint from Nevada CASA stated she is pleased to say they have one of their interns, Gabrielle Hackbarth, on the call today.

4. **For Possible Action:** Meeting Minutes from March 18, 2022 - Justice Nancy Saitta

Shelia Parks abstained.

Action: A motion was made by Judge Michael Montero to approve the minutes, seconded by Judge Rebecca Burton, and carried to approve the minutes of March 18, 2022.

5. **For Information:** Aurora Center for Healing Presentation- McKaye Treanor
The agenda item was tabled and will be added to the next meeting agenda.

6. **For Information:** Clark County School District Update- Clark County School District Representative

- Provide an update on Clark County School District efforts

Dr. Jesus Jara stated the purpose of the School Justice Partnership is to eliminate the school to prison pipeline. They were seeing kids moving from school to school and resources were not being provided. The Board of Trustees has taken a step on their efforts and work to reduce disproportionality. The school district police department is a key resource and they are part of the School Justice Partnership. The police officers are being trained on warnings and resolutions. The school district also offers de-escalation training to the officers. From 2019 to 2020, the Clark County School District Police Services responded to 6,201 calls for service. From August 2, 2021 to February 9, 2022, when kids started going back to school there were 5,350 calls for service. The goal is to change the behavior of the students and not just process them. There has been an increase in written warnings issued by the School Justice Partnership to Black/African American and Hispanic students. During the 2021 calendar year, The Harbor served 3,853 youth and families. Only two percent of those youth escalated to the Department of Juvenile Justice Services. They have seen an increase in the intensity of violent acts. Based on the number of referrals for the top 20 offenses, possession of marijuana as a first offense has decreased. The school district monitors chronic absenteeism, which is a quality measure on the Nevada School Performance Framework that captures the total percentage of students who are absent for ten percent or more of their enrolled days. Student suspensions have been consistent in the last 5 years, except for 2021 since students were at home. They have seen a decrease in expulsions from 2017 to the 2021-2022 school year. In October 2020 when an uptick was seen in mental health crisis, every school was mandated to have a multi-tiered leadership team which consisted of a Principal, School Administrator, Counselor, Social Worker, and Educators. The team analyzed data. The Panorama Education, a universal screener, was brought in where students and staff completed a survey. It helped the school district identify when students needed help. The multi-tiered leadership team would reach out to students who needed help and would send a Social Worker to the home. The Care Solace case management system is used to refer students for services. Hazel Health and PM Pediatrics are the telehealth support systems which are available for students at every school. The Board of Trustees recently approved the social emotional curriculum to train educators in the schools. The school district is very proud of the work. Dr. Jesus Jara thanked Justice Nancy Saitta for the opportunity to present to the Commission. It is a community effort, and they need to stay focused on the work they are doing for their kids.

Justice Nancy Saitta asked Elvira Saldana to maintain the presentation for the annual report.

Assemblyman Steve Yeager stated he read the slide with the number of offenses and categories listed as indicating the numbers have been down recently. It looked like the 2020-2021 numbers were lower than the 2019. Assemblyman Steve Yeager asked Dr. Jesus Jara for clarification on his statement that everything had gone up except for the marijuana offense.

Dr. Jesus Jara stated Assemblyman Steve Yeager is correct, it has gone down.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs asked what the school district and community partners are doing to engage the families when the students are having problematic behaviors in school.

Dr. Jesus Jara stated The Harbor includes the family. They have created a reengagement process for violent acts which requires the family to participate before the student comes back after a suspension or expulsion. The family must be part of the counseling session as they reengage them back into school.

Jane Saint stated slide number 5 listed illegal shootings however gun possession was not listed. Jane Saint asked where gun possession falls in.

Dr. Jesus Jara stated those are the calls for service and how they track them. It is based on how the call comes into dispatch services.

Jane Saint asked if it is just possession of a gun if they would get called.

Dr. Jesus Jara stated they would.

Justice Elissa Cadish asked if there is a student found on campus with a firearm and they have not shot it and there is a call for service if it gets categorized as an illegal shooting.

Dr. Jesus Jara stated, no it is different.

Justice Elissa Cadish asked if there is a different category it would fall into on a call for service for possession but no shooting.

Dr. Jesus Jara stated slide 11 reflects possession of a dangerous weapon under juvenile referrals. It is not a call.

Justice Elissa Cadish asked if it would be a referral and not a call for service.

Dr. Jesus Jara stated that is correct.

Brigid Duffy stated the calls for service are when someone calls 911 and they dispatch school police. The slide lists only the top 20 calls for service. On the referrals, the dangerous weapons would not necessarily include the firearms. It would be a separate category. Although there have been firearms on campus, they are not in the top amount of the cases referred to them.

Justice Elissa Cadish stated there have been incidents of violence at schools directed at teachers and there needs to be services provided to determine the underlying problem. Justice Elissa Cadish asked how those issues are being addressed.

Dr. Jesus Jara stated they are looking at maybe adding other services. One of the things they are seeing is student mental health data does not come to them readily available. They are working to find a solution.

Justice Elissa Cadish asked if there are school counselors on school campuses.

Dr. Jesus Jara stated they have school counselors and social workers. They have partnered with Nevada State College to help create a pipeline for school psychologists.

Brigid Duffy stated she co-chairs the School Justice Partnership and they have focused on removing some of the low-level offenses coming to the juvenile justice system and asking schools to partner with diversion services, warning citations, and mentoring programs to keep those children from entering the juvenile justice system through way of citation or arrest. Some of the horrific acts resulting in injury and weapons on school campus they have seen they do not have any prior juvenile justice history.

Kimberly Palma-Ortega commented even if there are great programs, often the follow up piece is what is missing. Kimberly Palma-Ortega asked if in the new set of programs, if there is a way to review if any of the children have cases with the family court.

Dr. Jesus Jara stated they meet regularly with the School Justice Partnership. They need assistance with family engagement. Dr. Jesus Jara requested Kimberly Palma-Ortega email him if she wishes to be a part of the work they are doing.

Kimberly Palma-Ortega stated she would be more than happy to help.

Justice Nancy Saitta suggested having a presentation from a similar subject matter expert in Judge Michael Montero's area.

Judge Michael Montero stated it would be Pauline Salla. He will meet with her and discuss what they can do.

7. For Information: Nevada Children's Commission Update- Justice Nancy Saitta

- Provide an update on the structure of the Nevada Children's Commission and future planning
Justice Nancy Saitta stated part of the new structure is to combine other commissions under the Children's Commission. With the assistance of Brigid Duffy and the Governor's representative, Ms. Bortolin, they are trying to create a commission where they are all speaking with the same voice bringing leadership together and resources under one umbrella. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) must be number one. The restructure of the Children's Commission and other related commissions/committees is number two.

Brigid Duffy stated she had the honor of being asked by the Governor's staff, Bailey Bortolin, to talk with her about the ability to restructure the Children's Commission considering all the other different groups who are meeting and doing duplicative work. They are working on the restructure. The most hopeful thing is they will be able to staff the Children's Commission with its own direct staff rather than DCFS staff. It is difficult to have challenging and critical conversations of children's issues when staff is one of the main players in all children's issues across the state for mental health, juvenile justice, and child welfare funding streams. They need an independent basis of staff. What has made the Texas Commission successful is they had a lawyer on staff and support staff which provided research. The restructure will help potential duplicative meetings. Next week they are reconvening to present the plan.

Justice Nancy Saitta asked committee members if they had any questions.

Kimberly Palma-Ortega is appreciative of all the efforts and is looking forward to having everyone at the same table and having the same conversations. It will buy everyone more time to put the efforts back on the ground to have some moving components.

Justice Elissa Cadish stated, in coordination with the Governor's Office they are looking ahead at what the Children's Commission will be, going forward. They are looking at it being a statutory created commission and move some of the existing commissions to end up as subcommittees/standing committees of the Children's Commission with the Children's Commission as the broad umbrella organization. There is still some discussion whether the Children's Commission would remain housed at the Supreme Court or whether it would be more appropriate to be within the Executive Branch. There are also some discussions about what they talk about, whether they focus on issues regarding children in the child welfare and juvenile justice system or if they should more broadly consider all children in the state. Those are some issues being considered as they work on finalizing what the concept is, which would then be translated into legislation for the next session. If any of the committee members have thoughts on the outstanding issues, please submit them to Elvira Saldana.

8. For Information: American Rescue Plan Act Funding Update- Dr. Cindy Pitlock

- Provide updates on any information relating to the American Rescue Plan Act Funding

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated one of the positive things that came out of COVID was a huge amount of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Everyone statewide is coming together to determine the best use of the funds. The Division's ARPA requests go to the Director's Office, then the Governor's Finance Office, followed by the Governor's Office and then to the Legislative Counsel Bureau and the Interim Finance Committee (IFC). One thing accomplished in the process is a three-tiered approach to the Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility service levels for youth. One being at the lower level, which is a staff secured group home lower-level lower risk youth service array. The next level they are trying to build is the unlocked staff secured, higher staff to youth ratio. The third level would be the full opening, hardening, tenancy improvements needed to fully staff at Desert Willow Treatment Center. There have been several conversations on how to accomplish it and provide safe services, safe staffing, and keep youth and staff safe. The first IFC meeting will be held June 21st and they anticipate the crisis stabilization centers model, emergency funding for crisis care, and emergency staffing and tenancy improvements necessary to fully open Desert Willow including the hardening for 4 years being presented. That will start the system of care service array at the crisis stabilization center for youth and families. The youth and families will need a full-service array with a continuing service of care provision from lowest intensity to highest intensity. For the August IFC meeting, they anticipate wraparound and intensive care coordination services being rolled out. Part of item 5 on the shared spreadsheet, family to family peer support, is a valid model which yields great results. Families succeed when they are kept at home and together. The community based in home service array is imperative to success. Intensive family in-home services would be mobile crisis response teams being able to support the families in-home for 60 to 90 days. Emergency and planned respite has been discussed. Families need to be wrapped in opportunities for both emergency and planned respite. The Division is partnering with Washoe and Clark County schools to provide mobile crisis response teams to solidify the crisis response in the school districts. Other funding requests include workforce development needs to be solidified, helping University Medical Center solidify their workforce development, unified billing support for school-based health, Washoe County home for women, Clark County Clinical Division, China Springs, supported living arrangements for Intellectual and Developmental Disability population, a buildout of 30 beds for youth in an unlocked staff secured setting, children's day treatment programs in the North and South, Clark County Qualified Residential Treatment Program start up, neurodevelopmental/autism for the UNR Center for Autism, and emergency staffing for the Oasis Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility through June 2023.

Kim Abbott thanked Dr. Cindy Pitlock. It is important work, and it is a once in a lifetime opportunity with this kind of funding. It gives them a way to make significant changes in the system. They see firsthand every day the problems caused by the gaps. Kim Abbott is happy to hear Dr. Cindy Pitlock talk about the different levels and different needs they need. There has been discussion about making sure they do keep kids in the least restrictive, appropriate environment. The lack of placements results in a huge problem. Kim Abbott appreciates the partnership and the opportunity to provide feedback and collaboration.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated it is not easy work.

Gwynneth Smith thanked Dr. Cindy Pitlock for her hard work and for including various stakeholders in discussions.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated it will take all of them to fix it.

Jane Saint commented the numbers are impressive. Due to a lot of nonprofits requesting funding from the ARPA recovery grant, the Governor's Finance Office decided to put aside a pool of money for the nonprofits. The amount set aside was 30 million dollars. The Governor's Finance Office established an application process. There was a total of 337 applications submitted requesting 445 million dollars. Jane Saint asked if there are any discussions or thoughts on how they can reach those numbers.

Amber Howell stated she can speak from Washoe County's perspective with the request they have put forward. What they have found with their experiences over the last couple of years and seeing different families, is that 40 percent of child welfare could be closed if there were appropriate mental health services. Mental health is a foundational piece that is missing. The more children coming into care that do not get their mental health treatment needs met, it requires more additional things. This sets a foundation so they can start decreasing the number of entries into the system by settling them down and getting them the treatment they need at the lowest level possible. Without the foundational pieces, if they do not have a framework where children can go, they penetrate through the system and the services get bigger and more costly. The psychiatric illness and chronicity continue to increase and becomes more pervasive. Mental health is the foundational piece that has been missing. If they could see this in fruition and have it do what it is meant to do, it will decrease a lot of exposure to other systems.

Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno stated in response to Jane Saint's question, they have had the conversations since they got out of the last special session and regular session. It does come down to the dollars. They want to make sure with the temporary federal funds coming in, they do not want to setup programs which the general fund budget is not going to be able to support. If it does support it, where are they taking those dollars away from other programs to support what they need. The conversation is if they know they are on the front end and do the work on the front end, they will not need as many of the other services they are now having to provide.

Kimberly Palma-Ortega stated Dr. Cindy Pitlock hit it right on the head with wraparound, start to finish. It is where they seal the deal and make sure the efforts initiated have the follow up and build the foundation as long term. Kimberly Palma-Ortega congratulated everyone for the efforts made.

9. For Possible Action: American Rescue Plan Act Funding Recommendations

- Discuss and identify funding recommendations

Justice Elissa Cadish stated the Governor's staff reached out to the Co-Chairs to ask for help, in terms of providing funding recommendations. They have several asks for funds from the ARPA money available and they are trying to go through them and consider them all. Emails were sent out to the committee members asking if they were involved in or were aware of ARPA funds requests which should be considered. Justice Elissa Cadish asked if any commission members would like to speak on it.

Shelia Parks stated she wishes to speak in support of any funding that can go towards the state organization. While their CASA volunteers are not providing direct mental health services, having a strong state organization that is able to support the CASA programs currently standing and hopefully they can develop programs where there are additional programs needed. The volunteers are supporting the children who are in locked facilities, day treatment, and in high level of care. The social and emotional support the volunteers are providing to the children in the facilities supports the treatment of the children. Shelia Parks stated she would support anything that could go towards the state organization. It is important if they can provide some support to the state organization.

Justice Elissa Cadish asked if there is a state CASA ARPA request Shelia Parks is talking about.

Jane Saint stated they applied at the end of June 2021, and they also applied for the nonprofit pool of money. Jane Saint has been informed due to them not being part of DCFS' strategic plan they are not part of the mix. They need to know how they can work with DCFS and better serve their children.

Justice Elissa Cadish asked Jane Saint to describe the nature of the request.

Jane Saint stated the request was for 2.5 million dollars. Seventy percent of the money would go back to the local programs. They would also be using the money for recruitment and community outreach to get more volunteers. Currently they have 8 local programs across the state. They will be adding a ninth one. The state association's mission is to champion the needs of abused and neglected children through helping the local programs increase their capacity to serve more kids.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated she would be more than happy to accept the formation of an ARPA request and bump it on their behalf, let the legislature know the need is present and give them the opportunity to support. Dr. Cindy Pitlock suggested that would be the direction they would go.

Jane Saint stated she welcomes the opportunity and will follow up with Dr. Cindy Pitlock.

Justice Nancy Saitta requested commission members to submit ARPA requests to Elvira Saldana a week from today.

- Vote and approve funding recommendations
Funding recommendations were not voted on and approved.

10. For Information: Court Improvement Program Update- Zaide Martinez

- Provide updates on the Court Improvement Program
Justice Nancy Saitta introduced Zaide Martinez, the new Court Improvement Program Coordinator. Zaide Martinez comes with 3 years of experience.

Brigid Duffy commented she had the opportunity to watch Zaide Martinez at the Judicial Leadership Summit on Child Welfare and did not know her personal journey. It was fascinating to watch her share it. Hopefully one day it can be looped in somehow.

Justice Nancy Saitta stated she knows the story and will add it to one of the agendas.

11. For Information: Updates from Committees

- Behavioral Health Committee- Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, Dr. Joe Haas
- Child Welfare Committee- Megan Miller, Tim Burch, Ryan Gustafson, Judge Paige Dollinger, Judge Stephanie Charter, Shelia Parks
- Education Committee- Janice Wolf, Kimberly Palma-Ortega, Dr. Jesus Jara, Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner
- Juvenile Justice Committee- Judge William Voy, Judge Egan Walker, Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno, Senator Keith Pickard, Assemblyman Steve Yeager

Justice Nancy Saitta requested a written report on where the committees are at, be submitted.

12. For Information: COVID-19 Awareness

- Discuss and provide updates on available resources relating to COVID efforts
There were no updates.

13. For Possible Action: Discuss and Decide Upon Next Steps– Justice Nancy Saitta

- Assign Tasks to Committee Members (if needed)
Tasks were not assigned.
- Specify Agenda Items for the Next Meeting
No recommendations were made.
- Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time
 - i. Friday, October 14, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

Justice Elissa Cadish stated the next meeting they would like for it to be in person. It will be a meeting with hopefully the entire Nevada Supreme Court. The meeting will be held in the two court buildings in Las Vegas and Carson City. They are looking at doing a full report of what the Commission has been doing, what has been accomplished, why it is important, and what the plans are going forward.

Judge Michael Montero commented the Nevada Specialty Court Conference is occurring during the next scheduled meeting date and time.

Elvira Saldana noted for the record, Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno and Kimberly Palma-Ortega joined the meeting after roll call and Judge Egan Walker and Senator Keith Pickard were not going to be able to attend today's meeting.

14. Public Comment and Discussion

Shelia Parks commented Carolyn Muscari, who is one of their CASA volunteers who has been with their program for 40½ years, was recognized at the national CASA Conference in Seattle as number one volunteer of the year out of 93,000 volunteers across the United States.

15. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.