

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 Draft Meeting Minutes

**DATE:** Monday, October 17, 2022

**TIME:** 10:00 A.M. - Adjournment

**LOCATIONS:**

Nevada Supreme Court  
201 S. Carson Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Carson City, NV 89701

**AND**

Nevada Supreme Court  
408 E. Clark Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89101

**VIDEO CONFERENCE:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87901610706?pwd=liw3CKaGGttWhPXBRPYRWBkCD-7T4Y.1>

**TELECONFERENCE LINE:** Dial by your location

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)  
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+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)  
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**Meeting ID: 879 0161 0706**

**Passcode: 282593**

**Find your local number:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kcmXoMWoUM>

- 1. Call to Order** – Justice Nancy Saitta, Justice Elissa Cadish, Dr. Cindy Pitlock  
The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Justice Nancy Saitta.
- 2. Welcome and Introductions (Roll Call)- DCFS Staff**  
Justice Elissa Cadish welcomed the Commission members and the public in attendance. Justice Elissa Cadish stated she was privileged to be appointed Co-Chair in late 2019. It has been a privilege to be a part

of the Children’s Commission and an opportunity to learn so much about the issues affecting the children involved in the legal system in one way or the other around the whole state. Moving forward, Justice Elissa Cadish looks forward to contributing more to the conversation rather than just listening and learning. Justice Elissa Cadish stated she thinks it is a great group, everyone is dedicated to the well-being of children and the citizens of the state of Nevada. Justice Elissa Cadish looks forward to having more in person meetings and continuing to share resources, information, and experiences throughout the state of Nevada. Justice Elissa Cadish thanked everyone for being present.

**Members Present in Person:** Justice Nancy Saitta, Justice Elissa Cadish, Dr. Cindy Pitlock, Judge Rebecca Burton, Brigid Duffy, Zaide Martinez, Megan Miller, Shelia Parks, Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner, Judge Egan Walker, Janice Wolf

**Members Present by Video:** Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno, Judge Michael Montero, Kimberly Palma-Ortega, Senator Keith Pickard

**Members Absent:** Nancy Brune, Tim Burch, Judge Paige Dollinger, Amber Howell, Dr. Jesus Jara, Assemblyman Steve Yeager

**DCFS Staff:** Elvira Saldana

**Public:** Justice James Hardesty, Justice Douglas Herndon, Buffy Okuma, Sharon Benson, Katherine Stocks, Gwynneth Smith, DeNeese Parker, Kim Abbott, Lea Case, Linda Anderson, Ron Murphy, Vanessa Dunn, Barry Cole, Emily Khanankhaeng, Alyssa Chua, Jane Saint

Roll call was taken, and it was determined a quorum of the Nevada Children’s Commission was present.

**3. Public Comment and Discussion**

There was no public comment.

**4. For Possible Action: Meeting Minutes June 10, 2022 - Justice Nancy Saitta**

Justice Nancy Saitta asked commission members if there were any additions or corrections to the June 10, 2022 meeting minutes.

No recommendations were made.

Justice Nancy Saitta asked for a motion to approve.

**Action:** A motion was made by Judge Rebecca Burton to approve the minutes, seconded by Justice Elissa Cadish, and carried to approve the minutes of June 10, 2022. Judge Egan Walker, Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner, and Janice Wolf abstained.

**5. For Information: Overview of the Nevada Children’s Commission- Justice Nancy Saitta**

- Provide a brief history of the Nevada Children’s Commission and a status report  
Justice Nancy Saitta stated the Commission was created by an administrative docket order in 2016. The plan for the Commission was to create an all-encompassing entity to oversee the widely disbursed child and family serving entities across the state of Nevada. Membership was also established by the court. Over the past 5 years, the Commission has expanded. Subject matter experts have been added to the subcommittees to better address what the Commission needs to be

considering. In 2017, when the Commission began to officially meet, they realized the first job of the Commission was to identify other similarly situated committees, commissions, task forces, and legislatively created entities that were looking at children and families in the state. They found there were hundreds of these entities, and they realized identifying those committees/commissions was not going to be a productive effort. An executive collaborative planning committee was created within the Children's Commission. The committee held biweekly meetings for 12 months to identify what the subject matter areas should be and how they would bring the entities under the umbrella of the Commission. At the end of the 12 months, working outlines were created for the subject matter committees. One of the goals was to bring awareness. Ultimately, the Commission became a 5 committee Commission with broad subject matter coverage. Unfortunately, once the subject matter areas were determined, the Commission was faced with the pandemic. However, the Commission was able to immediately pivot into pandemic/COVID efforts. Boots on the ground efforts continued for 18 months and the Commission is back on track.

**6. For Information: Nevada Children's Commission Update- Brigid Duffy**

- Provide an update on the structure of the Nevada Children's Commission and future changes  
Brigid Duffy thanked Justice Hardesty and members of the Supreme Court for tasking her and the Governor's Office with looking at how the Children's Commission is currently operating and what they need to do moving forward. The pandemic in 2020 put a light on the fact the Commission can do some amazing things if they initiate and move into action together. The deficit the Commission has had is the Commission did not come with staff. They are looking at, hopefully, a statute coming in the next legislative session that will lay out the purpose of the Children's Commission, a general purpose of overseeing all issues that impact children in Nevada. Currently the ADKT limits it to child welfare. A collective decision has been made that it needs to be all children, not just child welfare children, and focus on prevention of children going into welfare, juvenile justice issues, education issues, and mental health issues. The statute should also identify membership, with most members being judges. One thing they have learned from studying Texas is it is judges in their ability to being nonbiased and to bring people together they need instead of individual people with individual agendas for their different disciplines. There should be a provision for an Executive Director and a couple of support staff. The Executive Director would organize the meetings, provide research, advise the Commission as well as prepare extensive reports. Hopefully the Executive Director would be an Attorney, for purposes of the research and advice to the Commission. The Executive Director would also be the connection between everybody. They are also looking to sunset current statutory commissions such as the Juvenile Justice Oversight Commission and the Mental Health Consortiums. There are so many groups doing so many different things they do not even know about. If they could bring all of them down and underneath the Commission, then there would be one voice, everyone could be heard at the same time, and they would all know what everyone is doing. With the Commission bringing up all the statutory commissions underneath them, they should be able to get work done for children. They would also be looking at having the advisory collaborative council. In Texas, the advisory council has over 40 members. The council would consist of individuals in the field, i.e., Chief DAs, Department of Family Services workers, Probation Officers, Educators, Mental Health professionals. They still plan to have 4-6 standing committees. The committees ideally would be led by judges as the Chairs with the Executive Director and support staff organizing the meetings. The Commission has a great future ahead if the plan can be move forward. The funding is still being questioned and where it will come from.

Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner asked Brigid Duffy to note the Commissions she envisions incorporating into the larger Commission.

Brigid Duffy clarified if Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner asked to talk about the Commissions which would sunset and would be underneath the full Commission.

Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner replied yes.

Brigid Duffy stated she is not sure if all of them. They would be the ones which are currently in statute. Some of the ones they picked out are the Juvenile Justice Oversight Commission, the Mental Health Consortiums, and the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children work group. However, there will be others.

Justice Elissa Cadish stated the idea is to not duplicate efforts.

Judge Egan Walker stated he celebrates the invigoration and reinvigoration of the Children's Commission as sort of a one stop shop. They know the children do not live in the silos which have inadvertently been created by multiple Commissions. Judge Egan Walker and Joey Orduna Hastings (Co-Chair of the Juvenile Justice Oversight Commission) welcome and support the structural change. It is what is best for kids. The same people are on the same Commissions across the state. It makes no sense to have four meetings to do what they can do in one meeting.

Kimberly Palma-Ortega asked where youth and families would fall into the new forum.

Justice Nancy Saitta stated as of now, across the board, probably each one of the subcommittees.

Brigid Duffy stated if they could get full commitment, they would have a child and a parent on each one of the subcommittees.

Justice Elissa Cadish stated as Brigid Duffy mentioned, several members of the group have been meeting with representatives from the Governor's Office. It is Justice Elissa Cadish's understanding a draft of the legislation is being worked on to submit the next legislative session. They are excited about the plan. It would help everyone out if they could cut out some of the duplication of effort and have staff on board to help.

Justice Nancy Saitta asked if there were any questions.

There were no questions.

Justice Saitta thanked Brigid Duffy for the heavy lifting she has done over the last 9 months.

**7. 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 about a year ago they saw where they were with the children's system of care/continuum of care, and they knew there were gaps. They knew youth did not have access to the right level of services for the right amount of time based on medical assessment and need with appropriate step down to services in a continuum. Continuum of services includes outpatient services through residential services, wraparound, intensive in home, mobile crisis, and partial hospitalization. The system of continuum of care is across child serving systems. A group was gathered a year ago to build out what they believe is needed in Nevada to fill in the gaps of the continuum of care. The June Interim Finance Committee (IFC) meeting brought the crisis

stabilization centers and emergency funding for crisis care for the underinsured and uninsured. In August, the Division received emergency staffing funds to maintain the PRTF services on the Oasis campus, funds to harden the Desert Willow Treatment Center to make it safer for youth and staff, 14.6 million for wraparound services, almost 5 million for intensive family in home, almost 2 million for family-to-family peer support, and almost 3 million for emergency and planned respite. Additional funding was received for the System of Care oversight, System of Care services for special populations for the Clark County Division Pass Thru and China Springs Pass Thru, mobile crisis response for Washoe and Clark County schools, and behavioral health workforce development. The Division will be staffing all of it and getting the services stood up. The services will be pushed out in tandem with building out the community provider network. The next IFC meeting will take place October 20<sup>th</sup>. There is quite a build out of what the Division will be asking for. Clark County QRTP start up is a great program which will allow them to initiate the QRTP process and be able to receive Title IV-E funding. The Division is looking to stand up additional services in the latency age treatment program in the South and early childhood day treatment program in the North. Funds will be requested to continue the independent living supplemental funding for transitional aged youth. Additional requests are family peer support workforce development, a pilot project with the UNLV School of Medicine for a community school model with a health focus, APRN and reimbursement parity, and community provider youth focused behavioral health services.

Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner commended Dr. Cindy Pitlock and her agency on the recent investments made. Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner strongly encouraged the Commission to consider writing a letter of support to the Interim Finance Committee.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated her focus is to move a whole system forward with a clear entry and exit point. Children need to land at the appropriate level of services based on medical assessment and medical necessity. They need to be able to move fluidly up and down the system based on changes in their profile.

Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner commented it would be helpful to note if there are any barriers to standing up a system. They are hearing in other sectors the workforce development/talent pipeline is a significant challenge to ensure an array of services. Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner asked for an overview of the vision and any barriers they may be facing.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated nationally there is a workforce crisis in all things health care. In Nevada they are leaning in on forming partnerships with the universities and their programs particularly in the space of providing clinical opportunities for students. While Nevada has great capacity to stand up and move programs, they need to in tandem lean in with the community providers to hopefully be able to empower them to do the best work in the space they are experienced in doing. Workforce is an issue however they need to scale it. Sustainability is also an issue so they will be working in tandem with the legislature and Medicaid colleagues. Provider network is a barrier. They need to work with the community providers to help them succeed in Nevada. Dr. Cindy Pitlock is hoping in the next 3 to 4 months they will be able to get a good Request for Proposal out to be able to stand the services up.

Brigid Duffy stated the lack of workforce is an issue the Children's Commission needs to be involved in. Brigid Duffy stated her niece is enrolled in a pre-med program at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia and is taking autism as a specialty on the side. Due to there being a lack of autism services, the university offers free credits. Adding something similar in Nevada with

medical schools and to be able to engage the colleges and universities with the Children's Commission would be a way to start building the workforce. The schools of medicine can be invited to a Commission meeting to have the conversation.

Justice Nancy Saitta stated it would be included on the next agenda.

Brigid Duffy stated there are ways to build the workforce by providing incentives.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated she agrees, would wholly support the conversation, and it should be placed on the agenda. Education is expensive and what an opportunity if the Commission can step in to facilitate something specific in that area and give students a clinical opportunity and perhaps a practice expansion opportunity.

Brigid Duffy asked if the mobile crisis response teams within Washoe and Clark County School Districts have taken off.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated not yet. They are working with the Department of Education, Clark County, and Washoe County to determine what it really looks like and what the real need is. With the conversations they have had, they are seeing the need is for the 45 day follow after an immediate intervention.

Brigid Duffy asked if Dr. Cindy Pitlock is referring to the 45 days after an acute hospitalization.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated she is referring to when there is an initial school response, the schools do not have the capacity to follow the family for a certain amount of time after the event and mobile crisis probably will.

Brigid Duffy asked if they will be closer into kicking off at the beginning of the year.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated yes. They need to make sure what they roll out is impactful and sustainable.

Justice Nancy Saitta asked if there will be rural responses.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated there is an infusion to help with the rural mobile crisis response however, it does look a little different because of the geographic boundaries. A lot of it is done in a telehealth type model. They are doubling down with the Division of Public and Behavioral Health to make sure there is an increased rural response as well.

Zaide Martinez commented something to be mindful of is how they can streamline processes which can help the shortage in the workforce but also help all the systems work together and make things easier to make the resources successful.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated it is a great point. The streamlining across child serving systems is really something they need to focus on. Part of the ARPA funds received for the Division of Child and Family Services is for oversight of the system. If funds are going to be pushed out to Nevada's families to receive services, they need to be high quality and evidence based. All systems need to be worked in and interwoven together as a whole child serving system. Funds were received for System of Care oversight to help coordinate those types of activities.

Justice Nancy Saitta asked if there were any additional questions.

Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner commented she is appreciative of the discussion about the workforce challenges. Dr. Tyler-Garner suggested considering partnering with the workforce system of the Governor's Office of Economic Development and Regional Development Authority to leverage the resources they can provide not only around incentivizing and support in training, however attracting providers. Dr. Tyler-Garner offered her support in submitting a letter of support in preparation for IFC.

Justice Nancy Saitta thanked Dr. Cindy Pitlock. Justice Nancy Saitta noted for the record, Senator Keith Pickard joined the meeting and asked Elvira Saldana to mark him as present.

## **8. For Information: Committee Presentations**

- Provide an overview of the committee, membership, and an update on the Commission's workplan goals

Justice Nancy Saitta extended thanks to Dr. Joe Haas for coming back and participating on the behavioral health committee.

- Behavioral Health Committee- Gwynneth Smith

Gwynneth Smith stated she is a Chief Deputy District Attorney in Clark County and the Chair of the Behavioral Health Committee. One of Gwyneth Smith's primary responsibilities in Clark County is the management of the mental health court (specialized court docket) involving the statutorily required procedures for children who are either acutely or residentially hospitalized for behavioral health reasons. The committee was reconstituted November of last year. The other members include Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, and Dr. Joseph Haas. Dr. Sheldon Jacobs is an employee of Clark County Department of Family Services and a psychologist. Dr. Sheldon Jacobs has a significant breadth of community mental health experience. Kim Abbott is from the Legal Aid of Southern Nevada and was recently appointed the Mental Health Initiatives Manager. Kim Abbott has been a real leader on the issue of mental health initiatives. Dr. Joseph Haas was a clinical psychologist with Washoe County and brings a breadth of historical experience in our state regarding the services available to children both in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. The committee has met monthly, except for one month since November. Gwynneth Smith's primary focus was to have robust engagement from the community. The committee's number one priority is understanding and responding to the youth mental health crisis. At the first meeting the ADKT was reviewed and examined how it fits in with what needs to be done with youth mental health in Nevada. A key priority identified was increasing training particularly on the topics of trauma and neurodevelopmental disorders and the challenges it presents to children and families. Additionally, the need for technology to be able to appropriately gather the data needed to respond to what is happening in the state was identified. Regarding raising public awareness of challenges facing children and families, a topic the committee identified and continues to discuss at meetings is the increasing incidents they are seeing across the state of parents turning to the child welfare system to access services for their children because they cannot access the services either quickly enough or for the intensity they need in the community. The committee spent a meeting talking about breaking down working in silos. At another meeting, the nationwide youth mental health crisis was discussed. The committee reviewed the U.S. Surgeon General Youth Mental Health Report and solicited community stakeholders to help guide the committee on what to focus on. Dr. Joseph Haas reviewed the history in the state of Nevada and some of the historical issues which still exist and identified in the Department of Justice report. Over the last 8 months, the committee has focused on the dual diagnosis children mentioned earlier, children who have both a mental

health diagnosis and a neurodevelopmental diagnosis. Dr. Sheldon Jacobs helped coordinate a presentation by the Ackerman Center at UNLV to the full Commission in March. Kim Abbott and Gwynneth Smith have also discussed the Clark County Task Force efforts, to work with stakeholders across the community as well as state partners to identify the short- and long-term goals for improving the youth mental health system and developing a path of how to get there. One committee meeting was centered on behavioral health workforce development for children and youth in Nevada and Megan Comlossy from the University of Nevada Reno was invited. Megan Comlossy is the Director of an initiative called the Nevada Health Care Workforce and Pipeline Development Initiative. It is a statewide group of stakeholders from the community focused on the health care workforce development. The Ackerman Center was invited to the most recent meeting to focus on the provision of and the barriers with ABA therapy as well as what needs to be developed in terms of homes and in home treatment to meet the needs of the children. The breaking down of silos across the state and discipline is very important. The Children's Commission is well placed and should lead as a central authority to bring everyone together statewide. The structure and authority are needed to work on the problems together.

Kim Abbott stated as the Commission moves forward and thinks about its structure moving forward, to be mindful of ensuring to include the perspectives of those with experience and expertise around the neurodevelopmental issues. It continues to be an area of crisis for them.

Gwynneth Smith stated she agrees and thanked Kim Abbott for highlighting that point. Gwynneth Smith stated she would be happy to answer any questions.

There were no questions.

Justice Nancy Saitta stated the committees provided written summaries of their efforts which can be reviewed in further detail after the meeting.

Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner commented it was noted significant silos exist across systems and within divisions. Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner asked if there are particular places or structure, they would suggest should be incorporated to address the concerns they are seeing.

Gwynneth Smith stated she sees many of the people in the room and up North they need, to have the discussion. It needs to be broadened to include more public input, voices of children and families highlighted, representation from the different geographies, and representation from all the disciplines. Gwynneth Smith thinks the Children's Commission has an important role to play as the central force in gathering all the different constituents together. Having a centralized state entity whose job is to pull all the strands together into a central grade which is focused on identifying and advocating for issues affecting children in the state would be an important and beneficial development for kids and families.

- Child Welfare Committee- Megan Miller

Megan Miller stated she is a chief Deputy District Attorney in Clark County handling child welfare cases and the Chair of the Child Welfare Committee. Throughout the last year, the committee has focused on racial and ethnic disparities and children's mental health issues affecting children in foster care. The committee includes Tim Burch (Administrator for Clark County Department of Family Services), Ryan Gustafson (Division Director of Children Services for Washoe County Human Services Agency), Shelia Parks (Program Administrator of CASA), Judge Paige Dollinger from the Second Judicial District Court, and Judge Stephanie Charter from the Eighth Judicial



District Court. As an update for the workplan goals for the committee, tasks from the ADKT are ADKT 2 which focuses on training and development; ADKT 3, technology and data sharing capability; and ADKT 4, public awareness of challenges facing children and families. The second ADKT, the workplan asks the committees to create an inventory of current training, identify and prioritize gaps, and develop an implementation plan to fill the gaps. One of the largest gaps the committee returned to several times is the need for implicit bias training and culturally competent trainings specific to the child welfare system which would encompass everything from the investigations through the court system and ultimately permanency. Minimizing trauma for children in the court room setting was another idea for training. The committee also discussed training specific for issues affecting children in care who are members of the LGBTQ+ community. One of the ideas the committee discussed was potentially a roundtable to hear from children who are in the system and the issues they have encountered. Several of the committee members are boots on the ground individuals who can identify things they are seeing in individual court cases and patterns that are recurring. An issue Judge Dollinger brought to the forefront is during the permanency hearings they often are focusing on emergent issues for the children and when school grades are looked at, the children have low grades. Judge Dollinger and Judge Charter expressed a missing piece which could be useful in training is basic training on how to help foster parents and workers engage in the basics of the education system, i.e., how to look up grades and how to check the online portal for homework completed and due. In terms of ADKT 3, technology and data sharing inventory, gaps identified are whether children's IEPs are being tracked, better tracking of specific mental health issues children are facing, and tracking services received and if they are not receiving services, why not. The committee had a specific discussion about identifying and tracking denial rates for services and the reason behind the denial rates to start to correct them. Regarding ADKT 4, public awareness of challenges facing children and families, an issue the committee continues to discuss is there was not a lack of challenges to discuss and part of the difficulty in identifying challenges is due to there being compounding issues. One of the largest issues the committee has discussed is resource and staffing issues and recruiting and retaining staff for mental health providers. The committee has also discussed recruiting and retaining appropriate foster placements with emphasis on foster placements which are advanced foster care or that have training or background in providing a quasi-therapeutic home or knowledge in issues specific to children with more acute mental health needs. Every member on the committee has a breadth of anecdotal stories to share. They all share a feeling the anecdotal stories are very important and persuasive in trying to explain what problems they are facing for the children in Nevada and to raise awareness.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock commented she is thrilled the committee looked at the education piece for these youths and families. Children in the child welfare system have lower graduation rates and youth who do not graduate have less of an ability to have a sustainable income to support themselves and their families. Dr. Cindy Pitlock thanked the committee for looking at the topic.

○ Education Committee- Janice Wolf

Janice Wolf stated she is the Directing Attorney of the Children's Attorneys Project at the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada. The committee is fortunate to have Dr. Jesus Jara as a member. Dr. Jesus Jara is the Superintendent for the Clark County School District. Laura Obrist was recently added to the committee. Laura Obrist is with the Chancellor's Office and her specific area of expertise is in the Fostering Success Initiative. The initiative focuses on kids in foster care who are transitioning into the community and ensuring their education, vocational and employment options are explained and available for them. Thanks to Laura Obrist, a transition section was

added to the committee's plan and initiatives. Janice Wolf asked Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner and Kimberly Palma-Ortega to introduce themselves.

Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner stated she is with the Children's Advocacy Alliance and looks forward to supporting the Education Committee.

Kimberly Palma-Ortega stated she is honored to sit alongside everyone else on the Education Committee. Kimberly Palma-Ortega stated she is glad Laura Obrist is on the committee. The committee is looking to add additional people within the community. As a parent, Kimberly Palma-Ortega comes with a background within the juvenile justice system and the disability world.

Janice Wolf stated in listening to other committee reports it occurred to her how much the goals and objectives are alike and how overlapping the committees are. So much of what happens to children during their formative years and after, focuses on what happens or does not happen to them in school. The committee looked at where the black holes were in terms of educational needs, and they came up with three areas they wish to focus on. The areas are collaboration, data collection, and transition. Regarding collaboration, the committee realized there are a lot of things happening independently and they are hoping they could come up with a plan to bridge the gap and bring ideas, committees, and solutions together. One of the things the committee became concerned with is the school to delinquency pipeline. In dealing with school police, probation, parole, and the delinquency system it became really clear sometimes the people working with kids with disabilities do not understand how disabilities affect behavior in school. The committee would like to bring education to campus police, probation, and parole officers to understand what an IEP is, what it is there for, and how behavior of children with IEPs or behavioral and mental health disabilities affects how they behave in school. The committee would like to focus on the education piece to be able to ensure the law enforcement side which works with the kids understands what trauma is and how it affects behavior and school performance. A big part of what the committee and Commission must do is bring the fundamental understanding of how disabilities affect kids. If they do not educate to understand how disabilities affect children in school and the children end up in the delinquency system, they are stuck with the same complaints as the Department of Justice report, i.e., lack of services and lack of appropriate placements. The children end up in detention facilities which are not appropriate for their mental and behavioral health needs. In relation to transition, the Children's Attorneys Project at Legal Aid Center developed an app called Rise which provides resources to children transitioning out of foster care. The committee would like to see the development of those types of passport services for children in the rurals and Washoe County. At the last committee meeting, the committee adopted a white paper of recommendations for education. It is a roadmap for where the committee sees education going in the future. The document will be submitted to the Commission Chairs. Janice Wolf asked Kimberly Palma-Ortega if she would like to add anything.

Kimberly Palma-Ortega stated the committee would like to create a roadmap of informational resources at every level.

Janice Wolf commented one of the committee recommendations is to expand DAAY Court or create a new one to deal with other disabilities which affect their learning and school performance. By expanding or creating a new court, it would be a way to funnel services directly to kids who are needing them and are falling through the gaps.

Brigid Duffy asked Janice Wolf to clarify what DAAY Court is.

Janice Wolf stated DAAY Court is one of their specialized courts in Clark County which deals primarily with kids with autism who end up in the juvenile justice system. It is a way of getting services for kids and their families directly from the court. The committee feels there are other disabilities which also have an impact on learning and have gotten kids into the delinquency system who would also benefit from judicial intervention. If DAAY Court is not a court service provided statewide, it should be looked at. The other thing the committee talked about and recommended is expanding dyslexia services, testing, and screenings all through high school. Another committee recommendation is to create a dashboard which would, for example, enable a school police officer to understand whether a child in the process of being arrested has a disability they need to take into consideration before an arrest is made.

Kimberly Palma-Ortega stated she has had the opportunity to sit in and be a participant within the DAAY Court. Kimberly Palma-Ortega has seen 3 or 4 children graduate the program and transitioning well.

Justice Nancy Saitta stated the Commission report includes a yearly list of presentations which took place at each of the Commission meetings.

Justice Elissa Cadish stated the meeting agenda, minutes for the last meeting, and the annual report Justice Nancy Saitta is referring to were attached to the meeting invite. If anyone wishes to access the meeting material, it is posted on the DCFS website.

Justice Nancy Saitta stated the meeting material will be uploaded to the Administrative Office of the Courts website as well.

9. **For Information:** United States Department of Justice Investigation of Nevada's Use of Institutions to Serve Children with Behavioral Health Disabilities- Dr. Cindy Pitlock

- Provide an update on the investigation

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated the United States Department of Justice released the Investigation of Nevada's Use of Institutions to Serve Children with Behavioral Health Disabilities report on October 4<sup>th</sup>. The report highlighted what they knew. Dr. Cindy Pitlock is proud they were extremely proactive from the beginning to build out with the ARPA requests what they could for an immediate response. Other states who have gone through the process have ended up better off than when they started. The Division has been proactive and excited to roll out the ARPA response and push the system forward. A system response will be developed in conjunction with the Attorney General's Office, Director's Office, and Governor's Office. Dr. Cindy Pitlock looks forward to the work moving forward.

Judge Egan Walker stated he appreciates Dr. Cindy Pitlock's positive spin. It is important to remember these issues are not new. Nevada has had these challenges the entire 30 years Judge Egan Walker has been involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems in Nevada. They need to take a hard look across the system of mental health. They are in crisis in the adult competency world right now. That crisis is reflective of broader issues which are the same issues for children and families. Judge Egan Walker stated he joins and commits with Dr. Cindy Pitlock through the Governor's Task Force, among others, to find some nuisance and broad-based perspectives to bring water to this desert of resources they have in mental health issues.

Justice Nancy Saitta thanked Dr. Pitlock for presenting and providing an optimistic outlook.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated she is more than happy to keep the agenda item going for the transparency she can bring to the topic.

Zaide Martinez commented the Court Improvement Program (CIP) is also adding it as an ongoing agenda item.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated she has a whole system of people taking accountability and bringing forth ideas.

Sharon Benson stated as they move forward, she is appreciative everyone is on board right now and assisting. It will be a several year process with the Department of Justice. Sharon Benson stated she would appreciate the Children's Commission help keep this issue on the forefront with the legislators and community partners to continue to do what they need to do to meet the Justice Department's expectations and to bring the needed services to the youth in the state of Nevada and hopefully to the adults moving forward as well.

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

- Assign Tasks to Committee Members (if needed)  
Committees to identify any matters and next steps as agenda items for the next meeting agenda.
- Specify Agenda Items for the Next Meeting  
Transitional Living Center Update
- Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time
  - i. Friday, January 20, 2023 at 10:30 a.m.

Brigid Duffy stated as she has read articles about the shortage of foster homes since the pandemic and the increase of children coming into foster care, Brigid Duffy asked if the Child Welfare Committee could give the Commission an idea of what the void is in the state of Nevada and where they are lacking in foster homes (what types of foster homes). Brigid Duffy stated she thinks it would be within the job of the Children's Commission to partner to get a call for action out to get foster homes for children. It would be great work for the Commission to do and support the child welfare agencies. Brigid Duffy suggested if at the next meeting they could get how many beds they have, what types of bed are missing, and the number of kids who are not in a bed.

Justice Nancy Saitta asked Megan Miller if the information could be provided at the next meeting.

Megan Miller stated absolutely.

Justice Nancy Saitta asked Dr. Cindy Pitlock if the information at the state level could be provided.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock acknowledged it can be provided.

Brigid Duffy stated there are a lot of gaps. It would be good to know where they are lacking and what the void they are facing is, to know how as a Commission they can get their voices out to try to rally the community, especially in the rural communities. Brigid Duffy asked if at the following meeting after January, the Commission could get the number of how well the foster children did in the education field, i.e., graduation rates for the year and the deficiencies.

Justice Nancy Saitta stated it would be across the board, statewide if the Commission could receive it. Justice Nancy Saitta asked Judge Mike Montero if he has specific rural matters he would like to see as a result of the committee reports placed on the next agenda to please inform Elvira Saldana.

Judge Mike Montero stated at the June Commission meeting Justice Nancy Saitta had tasked him with looking into a presentation like the one received from the Clark County School District at the meeting. Judge Mike Montero stated he would look further into it. They have a lot of things underway to help the Division of Child and Family Services with recruiting foster homes. The grand opening of their transitional living center for youth is taking place this afternoon.

Justice Nancy Saitta informed Elvira Saldana a report out of the transitional living center opening would take place at the next meeting.

Judge Mike Montero acknowledged with a thumbs up via the virtual platform.

Justice Elissa Cadish asked Zaide Martinez if she would like to provide a brief report on the recent CIC Summit and what the focuses are going forward on CIP.

Zaide Martinez stated they had the Community Improvement Council (CIC) Summit and Judicial Roundtable. The CIC came out of the PIP in 2010 and it is a collaborative system of stakeholders to help improve kids in the child welfare system. The focus for the CIC Summit this year and for the child welfare stakeholders was to get more input from different stakeholders. The number of CIC participants increased from 6 to 10. They also focused on LGBTQ+ and kinship care. The CICs were able to collaborate with another and see what they are doing in their jurisdictions that can be implemented in theirs. They talked about timely permanency, the backlog, and what they can do as a system. CIP is doing a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) grant. They are hoping out of the collaboration and grant they can come up with a permanent solution to improve timely permanency particularly in the rural jurisdictions.

Justice Elissa Cadish asked if there were any questions.

There were no questions.

## **11. Public Comment and Discussion**

There was no public comment.

## **12. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.