



## STAFFING AND OVERSIGHT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Marygrace Billek, Chair

Lisa Chapland, Co-Chair

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“In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Trenton Times and the Newark Star Ledger and posted at the Department of State, 125 West State St., 1st Floor, Trenton, New Jersey.”

*\*Please note the meeting was recorded for the transcription of minutes.*

February 11, 2025

Meeting Minutes

### **Attendance:**

Marygrace Billek, Public Member

Mary Coogan, Advocates for Children of New Jersey

Lisa Chapland, Relative Resource Parent

Katie Stoeher, Department of Children and Families

Angie Waters, CASA

Linda Porcaro, Somerset County Department of Human Services

Traci Telemaque, Office of the Public Defender

Gina Hernandez, Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey

### **Guest:**

Svetlana Spiegel, Montclair University

Heather Edwards, Montclair University

### **Staff:**

Bethany D'Amelio, Department of Children and Families

### **1. Introduction**

Members provided brief introductions for the guests in attendance from Montclair University.

### **2. New Collaborations**

- **Data Partnership with Montclair University**

The SORS Committee is excited to explore a strategic partnership with Montclair University to improve its data-collection processes and advanced data analytics for the Annual SORS Report. This collaboration will strive to enhance the data quality for evaluating and recommending improvements in child welfare practices, ultimately benefiting the well-being of children and families within NJ's communities.

### **3. Committee 2025 Workplan Discussion**

- **The committee considered seven possible areas of focus for the 2025 workplan including the following:**
- Seeking independent feedback from DCP&P staff, utilizing survey methods.
- The provision of comprehensive, culturally responsive services to address identified needs of youth and families.
- Additional data on immunizations and dental exams. The committee will meet with representatives from the Child Health Unit to further explore the available data.
- **Flexible Funding Utilization**  
Significant dialogue was devoted to the use of flexible funding allocated to local offices. Concerns were raised about inequities in service provision resulting from inconsistent access to these funds. Further investigation into establishing uniform standards for fund allocation was proposed.
- **Service Array and Accessibility**  
The committee underscored the importance of a comprehensive service array. Preliminary assessments highlighted gaps in service accessibility, notably in psychological assessments and childcare subsidies. Strategies to streamline service access and reduce delays were explored.

#### 4. Future Actions

- **Addressing Service Waitlists**  
The committee acknowledged ongoing issues with service waitlists that hinder timely interventions. A plan was put forward to work closely with service providers to address staffing shortages and improve service delivery.
- **Review of Foster Care Practices**  
An inquiry into the support systems available to non-kin foster parents was initiated, with the goal of improving their interaction with biological and/or first families. This will form a central part of the committee's review in subsequent meetings.

#### 5. Closing Remarks

- The committee expressed its commitment to continuous improvement in child welfare services. Upcoming discussions will continue to focus on enhancing resource allocation and improving collaborative frameworks.

#### 6. Next Steps

- Organize follow-up discussions with relevant stakeholders on data integration.
- Formulate a detailed report assessment method for flexible funding allocation.
- Develop an outreach program to gather direct feedback from foster parents.

*This memo aims to maintain transparency and provide the public with an overview of the task force's recent deliberations. The committee values community input and engagement as we collectively strive to enhance the welfare of children and families across New Jersey. This meeting report was prepared, in part, with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).*

*For further information or queries, the public can reach out via the contact channels provided by the Department of Children and Families.*