

Child Fatality and Near Fatality External Review Panel Virtual Meeting

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

MINUTES

Members Present: Judge Melissa Moore Murphy, Chair; Hon. Benjamin Harrison, Chair; Lori Aldridge, Co-Chair, Tri County CASA; Commissioner Lesa Dennis, Department for Community Based Services; Senator Danny Carroll, State Senate; Representative Samara Heavrin, House of Representatives; Dr. Melissa Currie, Chief, Norton Children's Pediatric Protection Specialist; Dr. Christina Howard, Child Abuse Pediatrician, University of Kentucky; Dr. Elizabeth Salt, Citizen Foster Care Review Board; Hon. Olivia McCollum, Boone County Assistant Attorney; Geoff Wilson, LCSW, Practicing Addiction Counselor; Dr. Danielle Anderson, MAT Provider; Steve Shannon, KARP, Inc.; Janna Estep Jordan, Director of Operations, Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky; Dr. Henrietta Bada, Department for Public Health; Janice Bright, State Child Fatality Review Team; and Olivia Spradlin, ZeroV.

Welcome and Introductions

Judge Melissa Moore Murphy, Chair

Judge Murphy welcomed everyone to the April meeting. We have a few introductions and changes that are on the horizon. First and foremost, as you all know I've been a hold over for about a year now and the Secretary of State has appointed my replacement. Mr. Harrison is with us today; he is the Lewis County Attorney and will be the new panel chairperson. Mr. Harrison would you like to introduce yourself to the team?

Mr. Harrison: Hello, Judge. I am here and appreciate the introduction and being appointed to this distinguished panel. Unfortunately, I have to cut out of the meeting early today to cover for my Assistant County Attorney, but I wanted to join the meeting to say hello to everyone. I do know a few of you personally but I'm glad to be here and appreciate the introduction.

Judge Murphy: Thank you so much. This is not an easy panel to be on and I'm grateful for you willing to volunteer for this role. By virtue of the way the statute is written, the appointee from the Secretary of State's Office gets to be the Chair. He will resume that role in May, and I will roll off, but it has been a pleasure to be with you all for the last five years. I will miss doing the work, but I know it will continue and I'm grateful to have met each one of you. In other news, Lori Aldridge who has served as our CASA appointee and informal co-chair has been appointed as the new case analyst. So, you will still get to see Lori, but she will be in a role. Lori was the most qualified in that interview process and will start her new role soon. In the event that Mr. Harrison is unable to chair a meeting, you all will need to select a new co-chair. Judge Messer is willing to serve in this capacity but anyone else interested, please let Mr. Harrison and Elisha know. Additionally, we have asked Rep. Heavrin to give the panel a brief update on HB 271.

Legislative Update

Rep. Samara Heavrin

Thank you, Judge. We had a really great session with Families and Children and a wonderful working group. I want to brag on Commissioner Dennis for her involvement. We also had members from the panel, Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky, social workers, and many other stakeholders. Not everyone is happy with the legislation but most importantly it's a really good start. House Bill 271 was carried by Rep. Nick Wilson, and it does a few things, including defining what a safety plan is and the statewide reporting system. It requires additional monthly reporting from the Cabinet. DCBS already submits monthly reports, and we have a great relationship with them, but this ensures it continues. It requires for DCBS to accept reports for investigation if the report is made by one or more professional reporting sources within 30 days. I think that was one of the biggest changes we were most proud of. Or if the child is a plaintiff in an active emergency protective order or interpersonal protection order case. So, that automatically gets investigated. It requires the Cabinet to file a petition in court within 72 hours if the child remains outside of their home for more than 14 consecutive days. This portion came from some conversations we had with our Judges. Here in Grayson County, there was a child that was out of the home for five months and they keep renewing the safety plan. This piece would require a petition be filed after 14 consecutive days. It requires for the Cabinet to file all safety plans made each quarter into a report that includes the number of safety plans, the outcome of the safety plan, and the number of court petitions filed. We have also talked to AOC about this and it's really to streamline the process. This will also allow the courts to have access the child's permanency and protection records. That was a big change for the judges. Amends to allow for child dependency, neglect, or abuse reports to be submitted electronically. We actually took that out by mistake in a committee substitute last year. So, allowing electronic reporting and establishing a statewide reporting system for making reports of child dependency, neglect, and abuse via phone call or written report available to the public. Then it requires the Cabinet to refer families to community-based children and family service agencies for services when the report does not meet criteria for investigation. I thought that was a really good addition that came from a previous social worker. Which we know, those community-based service agencies are the backbone of our communities. That was a lot of information all at once but I'm happy to answer any questions. I appreciate the time to talk about this.

Sen. Danny Carroll: I think it's important to remember with that bill, we were able to get that passed with the stipulation that conversations would continue. There was some concern about too much information being accessible to the court that could have some repercussions that were perhaps unintended. Please understand we will need to continue discussions and may have to tweak that legislation further the next session. Samara had asked we get that through the Senate, and we were able to do so but with some caveats after some concerns were brought to my attention.

Judge Murphy: Thank you. Anyone else? Hearing none, with that we are grateful for our legislative representatives being on the call so we can have these conversations. Turning our attention to our agenda, everyone should have had an opportunity to review the March minutes and case review summaries. If there are no changes, I'll entertain a motion to approve those. Steve Shannon made a motion to approve which was seconded by Dr. Elizabeth Salt. With no objections, those are approved, and we will move onto case reviews.

Case Reviews:

The following cases were reviewed by the Panel. A case summary of findings and recommendations are attached and made a part of these minutes.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Case #</u>	<u>Analyst</u>
1	F-040-23- C	Joel Griffith
2	NF-059-23-C	Joel Griffith
3	NF-063-23-C	Joel Griffith
4	F-051-23-C	Joel Griffith
1	F-043-23-C	Cindy Curtsinger
2	NF-058-23-C	Cindy Curtsinger
3	NF-077-23-NC	Cindy Curtsinger
4	NF-152-23-NC	Cindy Curtsinger
4	NF-132-23-C	Joel Griffith
3	NF-151-23-C	Joel Griffith
2	NF-002-23-C	Joel Griffith
1	F-047-23-NC	Cindy Curtsinger
1	NF-136-23-C	Joel Griffith
2	NF-137-23-C	Joel Griffith

Additional Discussion:

Suicide Response

Geoff Wilson: To have three suicides that occurred at the same school, what, if any, recommendation or what is it that the school system might be doing to address that. Which may have happened, but it just made me think of that.

Joel: I thought the same. I want to say when we meet with mental health folks, they talk about going into schools after these events.

Steve Shannon: There should be a screening every year, kind of a training, I think it's not taken seriously by everybody. I'll check the status but there's legislation that would increase that twice a year. So, there would be a suicide prevention in August for all students and another one in January. Also, added to that not just teachers but all school personnel. This is scary and as Geoff Wilson said, you'll see a pattern that triggers it. The kids who need this training are usually the ones who don't pay attention to it and teachers don't always take them seriously. So hopefully, increasing the number of trainings will increase the effectiveness.

Dr. Salt: I just want to say that we got a grant to develop a youth suicide program which they developed a program and implemented with UK college students. As part of this, we looked at the regulations of what is required of school nurses specifically and it's very lax. About 74% of school nurses had not received any training on suicide prevention. Actually, the majority of them didn't even know what an adverse childhood event was. I think there's a lot of potential policy change and recommendations from this panel on the training that needs to come regarding suicide to our schools. There's an abundance of evidence of the success of these programs on suicide prevention. Especially in other countries and especially when it's a school wide initiative.

Joel: DPH sent a message and said Beck with DBHDID did intervene and maintains close contact with the school. All of these children had different forms of adverse childhood experiences.

Sen. Carroll: It may be too soon to do this but I'm really curious on the steps the school took to address this issue. I would really like for the school to come before a committee and talk about that and maybe we can look at some legislation as a result of what we learn. Again, I'll get with the Cabinet and talk about that. I don't want to address this too soon but maybe there are some lessons to be learned here. Maybe we need to step up some legislative efforts related to response and declare a crisis upon the second event and the more proactive response. And I'm not being critical, I don't know what DCBS did and what their response was. So, I don't want to talk out of term but that would be something I would love to learn more about on how that was handled, and this can be an incident we can use to make the system better.

Lori: I know with my daughter's school, in order to see the school nurse they submit a google form. One time she submitted the form before lunch, and she wasn't called to the office until 2:00. So, that makes me think if a child's having a mental health crisis, do they go through the same waiting period? If they're not getting called up until 2:00, they only have 30 minutes left in the day and will just stay the rest of the day. So, are kids slipping through the cracks in that process?

Jan: Sadly, there's only about 700 nurses in the public school system serving 700,000 students.

Judge Murphy: Janna put in the chat, having parent's communication. I know in many of the school systems and in Fayette, we have the Handle with Care Program. Where any incident happens, whether it's suicide or any student death, our student support services are flooding school with services for at least that week following. As Janna put, I don't know how well that information is than relayed to the parents in the school because they also need to be aware and on the lookout. Good conversation on things we need to be aware for recommendations going forward. Anything else?

Elisha: Joel, I'm going to mark this case to bring back for next month's meeting. Hopefully by then, we will have the school records on this particular case and then reevaluate all three cases next month. I'd also like to reach out to Beck and see if he would be willing to come talk to us about his role and the school's response.

Geoff: Real quick, Joel made that comment often times you hear that from a parent that we've had experience with them, and we know what to do with them and it's that false sense and actually that's the negative. That's where you really wonder what type of was provided to the parents and guardians at the school. I'd be curious to hear about that.

Next meeting Tuesday, May 21, 2024.

Meeting adjourned.