Wyoming Citizen Review Panel Meeting

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

Attendance: Emily Genoff, Chair, Jana Conine, Vice Chair/Treasurer, Lynn Huylar, JoLee Schuler, Carol Tullio, Carol Nicolarsen, Sherilyn England, Peter Newell, Panel members, Bryan Cook, Director, Laura Dobler, Department of Family Services, Ilaine Brown, Department of Education.

Absent: Dawn Sides, Department of Corrections, Carissa O’Malley, Stacy Strasser.

Meeting called to order.

September and December meeting minutes will be reviewed and voted on at the March Panel meeting.

Agenda rearranged to accommodate Panel member travel schedules.

1. WDE liaison: Emily asked for permission from the Wyoming Department of Education to invite Ilaine Brown to serve as the agency’s liaison. The agency generously offered to allow Ilaine to be the WDE representative. Ilaine worked for the Department of Family services for more than a decade and is now employed within the Career and Technical Education section of the WDE as a Consultant for Career Technical Student Organizations. Lynn motioned to add Iliane as the WDE liaison. The motion was seconded by Carol T. Motion passed unanimously.
2. Strategic planning: The March meeting in Casper, to be held Tuesday, March 17, will be a strategic planning session. Emily will send past strategic planning process outcomes with a summary for review. Public Knowledge’s Stacy Obrecht will be contacted to find out whether she is available to facilitate. Discussion followed concerning choosing one thing to make the Panel’s priority in 2020, and perhaps making that one thing the foster care system.
3. DFS: A federal visit is underway to review the state’s Performance Improvement Plan and timelines. Laura spent two weeks in November training staff on risk and safety assessments. All juvenile cases are to have safety assessments and safety plan starting next year. MDT policy and procedure has changed and is rolling out – the agency is moving to MDT meetings every month for every case for increased family involvement. The legislative session and budget approval are also a current focus. Technical difficulties with WYCAPS occurred recently and while the system was resuscitated, funding to replace it has been requested. Bryan and the Panel continue to facilitate focus groups in conjunction with the CQI reviews. Focus groups are offered to biological parents, foster youth and foster parents. The first groups were held in Cheyenne. The next groups will be held in mid-December in Wheatland, Torrington, and Douglas. Parent and youth meetings will held in Douglas led by Emily and Carissa, and Bryan will lead groups in Torrington and Wheatland. Feedback has been the process is going well. The foster care coordinator and District manager in District 8 asked that foster parents fill out surveys and provide feedback in writing rather than attend a focus group. The first 2020 review and focus will be in Casper. None of those attending in Cheyenne said they heard about the focus groups from LifeNet or CASA. Discussion followed regarding how to best engage people who might have an interest in participating in person or remotely. Suggestions for improvement include using Zoom and a conference call line to include people who can’t leave home, expanding the random pool of invitees to increase participation, offering an online version of the survey and posting the survey on the WyCRP website. Foster families need to know up front what to expect from the focus groups.
4. Panel officers: The treasurer position is vacant and a secretary is needed, although Carissa will stay on the Panel. Treasurer duties are to review a monthly profit and loss statement and credit card statements. The treasurer also signs checks. JoLee expressed an interest in being the treasurer. Finance policy and procedure needs to be reviewed. Sandy Murray, the accountant who completed the WyCRP tax return, will be asked to review it with Jana, Bryan and JoLee. A budget needs to be in place and Bryan is development that. The Panel should accrue three to six months of operating cash in the bank. A financial statement needs to be reviewed at each Panel meeting. Sherilyn motioned, Carol seconded moving JoLee into the treasurer position. Motion passed. Emily has been serving as Chair and Secretary due to Carissa’s work schedule. Sherilyn said she would be willing to be secretary. Carol motioned, Jana seconded making Sherilyn secretary. Motion passes.
5. Director’s Report (attached)
   1. DFS: Focus groups in Cheyenne were supported by Panel members Carol T., Lynn, Peter, JoLee and Emily. Sheri will have a youth council review the foster youth questions.
   2. Parents as Teachers: PAT Continues to move toward Blue Ribbon certification, amending policies and procedures. Final submittal of the first round of required documentation is in April and then the finalists for the next level of consideration in the process will be named.
   3. Kinship Navigator: The Cheyenne navigator position was filled. Gabby Rogers will start after the first of the year. In Casper, Jena Monahan has been working for two months on website development, risk and needs assessment, the intake process, and networking with DFS. Jena is taking referral calls.
   4. CJA: The Child Death Review Team reviewed three cases Dec. 3. Mandatory reporting training needs to be provided to medical providers. Wyoming is one of a few states where DFS can’t take custody; police have to be called. Wyoming law could be changed to allow DFS to remove children. The Agency should be asked to refer all major injury and fatality cases to the Child Death Review Team and complete information should be forwarded by the DFS supervisors. The next CJA meeting will be March 18 at the Youth Crisis Center in Casper.
   5. Website: Panel member bios and photos are being added to the website. Updates to the site have a cost attached. Panel members wondered if Carissa would be interested in posting to the FB page. Examples of upcoming posts could include focus groups dates and times, encouraging people to attend. Follow up reports also could be posted on FB saying (example) that the groups were well attended and valuable input was received and sent on to DFS.
6. Other Business – Sheri reviewed the Marbut report on homelessness and the recommendations made. The report is attached for all Panel members’ review. Discussion followed regarding how the Panel can get involved at the community level specific to youth and family issues.
7. Adjourn – next meeting will be Thursday, March 19 in Casper at the Youth Crisis Center.