



Alaska Citizen Review Panel

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The Alaska Citizen Review Panel evaluates the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies for effectiveness in discharging their child protection responsibilities. The Panel is mandated through CAPTA 1997 (P.L. 104-235), and enacted through AS 47.14.205.

CRP Panel and OCS Teleconference Summary

Tuesday, April 12, 2016

Attendance

Meeting Chaired by: Diwakar Vadapalli

Panel members in attendance: Joshua Stein; Rebecca Vale, Donna Aguiniga, Dana Hallett, Margaret McWilliams

OCS staff: Kim Guay substituted for Christy Lawton. Sharon Fleming and Jeannie Arledge participated from the Southeast Regional Office.

Staff: Ellen Ganley, Information Insights

Agenda

Southeast regional site visit debrief

- After finishing site visits, the draft report is shared with Christy and Travis from OCS and regional managers to discuss and clarify content before the report gets published.
- Jeannie said she agrees with issues identified, there are no surprises. However was not sure if a few things were characterized accurately.
- Diwakar clarified that the panel tries to record observations as shared by people interviewed. However we come with our own professional background and biases and observations. Our report is probably a combination of all of this in a constructive manner. Trying to avoid the impression that CRP is judging, but reporting in.
- Page 3 bullet: staff in outlying communities do not have enough regular supervision. Staff agree there is not a lot of in person supervision because of travel budget cuts, but those supervisors interact frequently and are hands on in knowing cases in Craig and Petersburg. Report may give impression that staff are out there on their own. Donna's impression is that more than one staff felt the supervision is insufficient, in spite of phone calls. This was not to say the staff are doing a bad job, the staff are extremely well respected. Their staff feel comfortable and supported by them. One example is that it takes more time to explain things in email than in person.

- 4th recommendation is more in person supervision. Staff responded that they need to find ways to stretch the budget that is likely to get tighter, maybe with technology – where people can access each other’s computer long distance to show how to do things.
- Rural – may need to do more training for phone supervisors. Not sure if that equals inadequate or not as promising as in person. Staff hopes new staff will get more face to face supervision. Donna stated that next year’s visit will be interesting to see these changes and their impact.
- Petersburg does have a car that works now and getting a newer one in Juneau.
- Jeannie stated that staff are not using motivational interview that much (2.2 practice issues – page 3, 3rd bullet.) Staff agree with the concern and focusing more on engagement interviewing focusing on engagement styles, engaging families, and hope to do case plans quicker, also doing hand written case plans in rural areas, eliminating steps and time. Delay in engaging families. That is a statewide goal we are working on. Going to do some modifications to reduce some steps and time and then roll out to the entire state. (Dana – another way to maximize technology.
- Org profile – errors in table, only 3 PSS4’s in Juneau. There are 5 field offices in the region, and staff felt that would be more representational if listed in the report even though the Panel did not visit all 5. Supervisors in 3 offices also cover Petersburg and Craig. Other offices cover them. So those three are very involved in Petersburg and Craig. Petersburg office has been vacant for a period. Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka shared coverage. Would like all 5 field offices in the table. Staff will gladly review Diwakar’s revision, per Diwakar’s request.
- Jeanie – page 6 4.1. org profile. Ketchikan – only 2 fsas. Craig 1 worker and 1 fsa. Petersburg 1 worker.
- Donna suggested that on page 3, remove - the use of motivational interviewing will not be used in the future. Also note that the SE region appears to be very functional and happy region. Very strong support in the community and positive reputation. That is very positive. Hopefully whatever you are doing could be implemented statewide. Dana: Some accolades to outlying supervisors and Juneau. Supervisors are very well thought of. Feels like a healthy place to be.
- Donna: positive response from the community and most staff on centralized intake. One worker was mentioned specifically by several. Glad the model is developing strongly. Dana wondered how it is going with the new initiative since March with Tlingit-Haida taking on more responsibility with children enrolled. Sharon stated they are working on it and have a lot of work to do with tribal court.

- Page 4 – collaboration with tribal government topic. Those recommendations to work with tribal government to provide trainings to OCS workers on tribal intervention. Was some discussion on tribes wondering about this new feeling. Tribe views safety differently. Just continue the collaboration. Same with 2nd collaboration. Southeast gets so many Alaska Native youth from around the state, so make sure cultural training includes the range of Alaska Native cultures. Last sentence in first bullet: Sharon did not understand first bullet on who the target audience was. Donna: OCS and ICWA workers – Look at relationships in the first bullet, a lot of strong relationships with several. Some of the smaller tribal entities have some feelings about not being as plugged in or connected. So help OCS workers to understand sovereignty over tribal members would improve relations for everyone. Diwakar: How many tribes are in SE region and how many of them are covered under Tlingit-Haida? Four – six tribes out of Tlingit Haida compact. SE has the lowest number of AK Native children who do not have a tribe representing them or involved in tribal intervention. Southeast region prides themselves in having a very low number without tribal intervention and are the shining example of the state. Need to clarify and capture the positives discussed. Tribes that were consulted – one struggles with OCS and Tlingit Haida, and it is difficult to engage with them. It is hard to see that one tribe who has 2 children in state custody can skew the report. Maybe phrase it that this is the smaller tribal. Donna stated that they were not sure all OCS workers appreciate the intervention of tribes or feel that there is a tension between tribal sovereignty and OCS perception of safety. Need to improve understanding of everyone's roles by everyone. Some, perhaps newer workers have a sense that tribes are interfering as opposed to being a partner. Sharon agrees. SE ICWA conference/meeting in Sept and agenda will include what intervention and sovereignty means. Working on this statewide too.
- Staff and Panel members appreciate the opportunity to talk about this, thanks to Christy's initiative.

Staff survey update

- Continuing to analyze data and write the report. Final class presentation on April 26th on campus. Diwakar will present overall information. Each student will present on their small section. Should be ready to send to OCS mid-May. Class is conducting the survey on behalf of CRP. Will submit the report to OCS and the public via the CRP website. The panel will review the report first. Please give schedule details to Christy, Travis and Kim for the class presentation.

OCS update on budget and any other items

- Christy has no news in regard to the budget.
- Been doing coaching program as part of National Center for Child Welfare Work Initiative ((NCCWI) 2 year grant, for coaching supervisors in best practice in groups of 6 – 8. 3 cohorts are in this 20 – 22 week program that includes a practice model. Getting good feedback and evaluation via Dr Kathy Traber from UAA and is thinking about publishing results because people like it. The other part of the same grant is partnering with UAA and UAF to attract people to the workforce, particular rural. Help people pay for tuition so they can

finish their degree and then work for OCS or tribe to pay back. Practicum placement with UAA or a tribe doing child welfare type work. This is 2nd year now and are pleased with quite a few rural placements. Just recruited for fall of 2016. Donna is excited for it. Kim is excited for the rural aspect of this. Hoping to get more local people invested in their communities. All are from Alaska. (Placements in Southeast, Kotzebue, Bethel, Kenai as well as Anchorage and Fairbanks.)

- Another practice change is the case planning process. Some of the changes – we think we can find bigger bang for buck is family engagement. Focus on case development and family engagement. Developing guides for monthly visits with families, children or resource families. Creating a packet of info for line workers and supervisors that will help drive the outcomes. Shifting away from ORCA with parents but doing handwritten in triplicate copies. One for parent, one for tribal partner and one for us. In monthly contact standards – getting a receipt type book that could be left with the family – including contact info and priorities to focus on this month until the next visit. And we can leave info with the families because it can be overwhelming, so leaving a to do list is helpful. Diwakar: what is the intended outcome or expect from leaving their to-do list copy with families: Hypothesis is if they have it the info written down – it can help them stay on track. Hear that they didn't know what needed to be done and in what order and who to call. Also giving a guide that will help with family engagement and it will document efforts. Plans to do a case plan every six months, monthly visits, developing a tool to guide for difficult discussions, leading to better outcomes.
- Eckerd project: Training with QA unit in Anchorage today and working on what that will look like. Problem statement is to reduce repeat maltreatment. Basically a rapid safety feedback- for investigative IA stage.
- Diwakar's question for Christy: First Alaskans gathering last May 2015m focusing on relationships with the tribes. 90 people. Diwakar tried to get updates on that but has not heard anything from OCS or First Alaskans. Kim knows that after synthesizing it down, a smaller group meets. Think something happening this month. More work being done on that. Will ask Christy to provide info to you, although she didn't think OCS is driving that one.

Debriefing:

- Discussion with Southeast was very constructive and positive. Says a lot about our progress on doing site reviews on how we do them, write about them and talk about them. Was good to clarify potential misunderstandings and that the report focuses on what has been done vs what they are going to do. Rebecca – appreciate the level of interest staff has in the report and how they took the report to heart. Would be good if Donna goes back for continuity. Agreed. Depends on how we use the budget. The Panel would like to do more advanced planning of site visits and budget is part of that.
- Faith Families – volunteer ambassadors who will take in children who don't quite meet the mandate for reporting to OCS but parents need time off. . Families get the same background check and training as foster parent. The mean stay is about 42 days. Weekly checks by volunteer ambassadors. 2 paid social workers in charge of new intakes and deciding whether it is OCS or

appropriate for ambassador. 2 social workers combined have about 40 years OCS experience so have a good sense of cases they are reviewing. Parents refer themselves only. They have unification data – may need to change that term. 92%. Brand new to AK. Started in Alaska in January; have 3 placements done in March. Started out of Indiana. Adoption rate is less than 1%. Goal is to help parents get back on their feet to help children avoid OCS. OCS was telling families about it in Alaska – Beacon Hill - differential response program was tried 10 years ago but didn't make any impact with caseloads. Faith organizations used to run foster families and orphanages and the church decided what happened to kids. Juneau intervention program provides intensive services in the home.

- Diwakar was pleasantly surprised by the progress on site visits. Donna agreed. She recommends that anyone going out on first or second site visit should have a partner. After a while, she got pretty comfortable doing it. And it is nice to have OCS outnumber the panel members in the interviews.
- Diwakar mentioned Christy's frequent concern regarding lack of clarity on who says what. Pros and cons were discussed.
- Will OCS do anything about what we write in the report?

