
Meeting Notes

Part 1: May 21, 2020 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Part 2: May 28, 2020 9:00 - 11:00 AM

PARTICIPANTS:

1. Sonya Hull – Acting Chair
2. Mariah Seater
3. Cameron Adams
4. Britta Hamre (DDA)
5. Elizabeth Shea (DDA)

Introduction:

- The CRP Coordinator called the 2020 Annual Meeting to order and after introductions the panelists began discussion on the content of the Annual Report to OCS.
- Sonya Hull, Acting Chair, announced that the previous chair, JP Ouellette, had left. Sonya indicated that she was looking forward to the August CRP workplan meeting and developing an agenda for the Panel's work this year.
- The CRP Coordinator went over the materials that were sent out earlier in the week, which contained the workplan, site visit reports, and the 2018-2019 Annual Report.
- The goal for the meeting is to review these docs and start drafting the annual report.

2019-2020 Annual Report:

- This is the first year of the long-range strategic plan developed by the Panel to guide the next 5 years.
- During the meeting the Panel will be drafting the annual report – for review by the panelists and for distribution to the public, state officials and legislature.
- It was suggested that the panel look at how 2018-2019 Annual report was formatted and review site visits accordingly.
- The goal from last year was to be concise in the findings and in the actual document and feedback was that last year's report was much more applicable and useful.
- Panelists liked the grouping of themes and not just regurgitating site visit reports, also this format will be consistent as it corresponds to format of strategic plan.
- Last year's plan was brief and concise, the panel wants to continue this trend but further advance branding.

REVIEWING SITE VISIT REPORTS –

Anchorage:

- Primary author of the report was the previous chair, it may be useful to get more insights from other panelists.

- In the next version of site visit report there will be information added from other panelists on the positives and negatives in order to accurately capture some of the impressions.

Kodiak:

- The Kodiak report needs some edits, including no names or identifying information.
- Some panelists didn't get a feel from this report on what the themes or things to work on were.
- One of the primary themes was that there is a lack of parenting classes and substance misuse resources in the community.
- Only one Panel member went to Kodiak, this is usually too heavy a lift for one person so this should be avoided in the future.

Bethel:

- Site visit report has similar themes to last year's site visit report; there was a change in leadership but much of the input was the same.
- It is an opportunity to hit on the fact that having the CRP do the visit led to recruitment and built the relationships with the communities.
- There were leadership changes that CRP may have had input in to through community engagement.
- Leadership at OCS has initiated many changes: they have suspended investigations and they have adjusted ideas of what needs investigations.
- With the pandemic they are seeing opportunities for quicker change, we will see what comes out on the other side.
- Panelists were optimistic about the level and pace of change, they hope to see it continue. Sometimes OCS takes the opportunities; sometimes they don't.
- This next year site visits will be difficult to rural communities due to levels of access and acceptance for outsiders. Some things that were daunting were actually places for them to improve.

Rules and Regulations:

- OCS wants input into CRP rules and regulations, as well as functioning.
- Panelists were invited to give feedback on draft regulations from OCS, some felt it was a courtesy and that there hasn't been much consultation.
- There is a shift happening - CRP has always been trying to be independent and the panel, wasn't overseen by OCS. In theory OCS doesn't have oversight but want input into what panel does and the way it is done.
- Currently the way it works is that OCS almost always have a veto over who is a panel member. Maybe there is a necessity for OCS to do background checks; panel needs to be aware of this. For example, there could be a situation where a frustrated parent wants to join the CRP for retaliation.
- The relationship has always been changing former chairs had different relationships, some combative and some more collaborative.
- Panel needs a happy medium, middle ground where everyone can build trust and do its best work.

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- The new policies were designed to institute some clear guidelines and provide structure, and there are questions about whether we must legally follow these policies.
 - It was clarified that new regulations haven't officially become effective because of COVID, and the status is that they are waiting to be finalized.
 - There were questions about whether this is an opportunity for other panelists to look them over and potentially provide feedback.

Discussion of Strategic Priorities/Annual Report Content:

General:

- All the strategic priorities don't directly relate to some of the things that would be in the site visit interviews; some of the strategic priorities are related to the panel and not OCS's roles and actions or the state of child welfare.
- Sometimes it is hard/confusing to tease that out because site visit reports have been structured like that.
- Panelists thought it would be useful to prioritize internal panel goals and functions this year instead of just focusing on OCS – this would be more in line with long-term strategic plan.
- Panelists felt that local OCS offices (at times) didn't make CRP visits a priority, though some improvements have occurred since pre-site visits meetings are held.
- There was a recommendation that panel make site visits more accessible so that more people can participate in them.
- There was discussion about other countries and how they handle their CPS systems, are any of the them functional? What do they look like? Sweden and Iceland, especially Iceland, have really amazing family engagement structures and family activities; functional OCS/CPS systems.
- We are in a really different environment, our financial and social structures don't invest in prevention, it doesn't fit with the prevailing ideology. We don't value taking care of families, we are just so individualistic.

Priority Areas:

- Public Outreach –
 - Not much had been done since the former chair left and without a strong leader responsibility would need to shift to other panel members.
- Collaborative Relationships –
 - OCS should consult CRP when making policy that impacts CRP.
 - panel members can get frustrated when there is no change; but the pace is always going to be slow.
 - Panelists have heard OCS feedback that they hear the same recommendations over and over from the CRP and maybe the CRP should focus on different things and not make the same recommendations each year.

- Several panelists say this is because they do nothing to change things and the CRP must continue to focus on the priorities, even if they seem repetitive; the perspectives of CRP and OCS are incongruous about the repetitiveness of CRP recommendations.
- These repeated recommendations are a result of slow or non-existent change at OCS. This creates discord – a result of a different perspective on the meaning or significance of repeated recommendations.
- Education –
 - CRP members asked for more opportunities for education and training on CPS systems.
 - Is there a way for CRP to reach out to training organizations? Could members be sponsored to attend certain trainings?
- Panel Functioning –
 - Panel felt it was very important to have more panel engagement and discussed attendance or participation requirements being a priority at the August Workplan Meeting.
 - There is an assumption on the panel that someone else is doing it, but we can't do that anymore. There needs to be more accountability.
 - Could we have standards for meeting attendance – it's hard to hold another agency accountable if we aren't really functional.
 - Challenge has been panel engagement and internal functions; it is recommended that there be the development of bylaws for members that have some requirements and that increase participation and accountability.

Calendar Overview:

- CRP typically takes the month of July off, with the workplan meeting is in August.
- Given the new scaffolding with the strategic plan, there is new structure that we can use, and the process will be less time consuming.