

Children's Services Review Panel (CAC) Minutes

March 24, 2025; 4:30 – 6:30 PM

<https://zoom.us/j/98236935012?pwd=1aQdPvVwuw8V310V5V3vYcJs7BcCem.1>

In person at Plato Building: 90 Plato Blvd. W, Saint Paul, MN 55107

Members Present: Ankit Sood, Jill Esch, Casey Acord & Tonya Long (Molly Evans-Excused, Naida Medicine-Crow-Excused)

Ramsey County Staff: Alex Cleveland

MN Dept. of Children, Youth, and Families: Laura Gapske

Guests: Beth Salzl, Nat Goodman, and Kat Ruth-Leigh

Reminder of Agreements:

If you would like a copy of agreements, please reach out to Laura Gapske.

New Actions:

- Approval of February 2024 minutes
 - Amendment to the date needed and then approved by panel.
 - Approval to purchase 50 gift cards at the amount of \$75.00 with hopes to use the FY 2025 funding, if possible.

Chair Update:

- Check in question.
- **TABLED DUE TO TECH ISSUES**-Guest Speaker, Shani Greene, Supervisor from the African American Family Well-being Unit with an overview of the MN African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act.
- Update on meetings with St. Paul Public Schools and MN Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare.
 - St. Paul Public Schools:
 - Met with “Fostering Connections” staff
 - Very receptive and excited about a survey project
 - They were willing to be a partner with us, but the survey would need to go through their district IRB
 - There are approximately 43 students in out-of-home care between the ages of 13-17
 - It was suggested the survey would take place in September 2025
 - Preference to give the youth gift cards at the time of distribution
 - Additional considerations: Anonymously completed, potential audio format, exit strategy for the survey, let the students know the purpose and what will be done

with the information, and would it be possible to compensate the staff for their addition work and assistance?

- Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare: U of M: Stacey Gehringer-Outreach communications, Kristy Piescher-Professional research evaluation and outreach, Traci LaBire-Director
 - If we want to use the survey, need to contact Dr. Piescher.
 - Data is a point in time/aggregated student which can be isolated, if needed for our project. They can create a separate space for our data collection.
 - Self-assessment tool is NOT a measurement.
 - Used with 15-21 years old w/ child welfare contact-not specific to foster care, total of 8 questions.
 - Kids do better with visual including graphics or emojis.
 - There would be no cost to use the survey or collect the data unless we wanted to partner with their researchers on what they could offer for an analysis.
 - Ideally, the survey would be conducted twice to compare overtime.
 - We would still need an IRB process if there were any evaluation process.
 - Kristy can share the manual regarding partnership.
 - The well-being survey was developed with listening groups with youth and caregivers, tested with youth.
 - There were concerns about using narrative questions in researching the WIY tool.

County Update: Alex Cleveland

MAAFPA Update

The Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Disproportionality Act started on January 1st and has been implemented in Ramsey and Hennepin County. The goal is to keep families together and children in community. This will be done by having smaller caseloads for workers, using active efforts, and focusing on cultural specificity and family needs. Ramsey County has been hiring many new staff (80) to fill these roles at the County. There are liaisons certified by the Human Rights Council. Workers are learning to connect with families under the new legislation still at 30% of cases.

DCYF Update: Gapske

- SOS Applications
 - Beth Salzl
 - Kat Ruth-Leigh
- We received two applications for the panel that have completed applications and been interviewed.
- Legislative updates will be shared when they become available regarding child welfare.

Survey Proposal:

Discussion

Panel members drafted language to convey the purpose of the survey and discussed how the results would be used or implemented after receiving the results.

Purpose: Elevate foster youth voices. Share their experience and assess if the proper services are being offered.

Objective: Use the information to adapt or modify how services are offered. Potentially work with Office of Ombudspersons for Foster Youth (OOFY) to explore a statewide assessment like New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

Next Steps, Action Items:

- Gapske will ask David about compensation and gift card process.
- Ankit will draft language that conveys the purpose of the survey to share and upload to the Google Drive.
- Gapske will complete the DCYF Continuous Quality Initiative survey assistance request form and get back in touch with the DCYF Internal Review Board (IRB).
- All panel members are asked to provide feedback on the draft survey questions by April 11th to Gapske.
- Co-chairs, Ramsey County, and Gapske will finalize whether the panel meetings will stay on Monday evenings or move to Thursday evenings.
- Tonya and Ankit will reach back out to St. Paul Public Schools to learn more about their timelines, if project continues with their partnership especially around the IRB. Inquiry on what information they would need from us.