

Kent County
Family & Children's
Coordinating Council



KCFCCC Meeting Minutes
September 1, 2009, 12:00pm – 1:30pm
MSU Extension Offices – **Room B**
775 Ball Avenue, NE

Members/Alternates Present: Susan Broman, Candace Cowling, Sandy Davis, Kristen Gietzen, Jack Greenfield, Lynne Ferrell, Lynn Heemstra, Paul Ippel, Ron Jimmerson, Jackie Klinestecker, Rich Liberatore, Sharon Loughridge, Carol Paine-McGovern, Mike Nowik, Diana Sieger, Jim Talen, Dr. Bernard Taylor, Matthew VanZetten, Sandy Walls, Patti Warmington, Andy Zylstra

Members Absent: Tom Czerwinski, Bev Drake, William Forsyth, Bob Haight, Judge Patrick Hillary, Kevin Konarska, Cathy Raevsky,

Guests: Betsy Boggs, Wayman Britt, Jon Wilmot

1. Welcome & Call to Order

Jack Greenfield opened the meeting with a welcome and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

A motion was made by Lynne Ferrell to approve the June minutes, supported by Paul Ippel, **UNANIMOUS.**

2. Full Service Community School Act

Jack said this legislation is currently being reviewed and will be introduced. It was discussed in full at the Executive Committee. He said it supports the KSSN approach. Jack is asking for support of the full committee to pass along community support to the legislation.

Sue Broman made a motion to support the legislation, Carol Paine-McGovern supported, **UNANIMOUS.**

3. Michigan Community School Conference

Matthew VanZetten began talking about the KSSN Community Schools Final Report. Hoping to share the report with the public as well as use it to influence Lansing to support student achievement. They came up with the idea of a policy-makers conference in Lansing. They will be bringing in leaders in the Community School Movement, to talk about the Chronic Absenteeism focus of her research and its importance of a preventative tool to limit chronic absenteeism for academic achievement. The date is Thursday, November 5. The agenda is being created right now. The guests are confirmed: Jane Quinn, Hedy Chang, Marty Blank. The 3-year report will also be rolled out on that day. The key audience will be staff from the Department of Education, staff from the DHS, gubernatorial candidates and key staff members. Ron Koehler and Matthew have been planning this together. The hope is the new KSSN Director, once hired, this will be one of their key measures to

help roll it out.

4. Prevention Initiative Budget

Matthew VanZetten mentioned the budget target for the Prevention Initiative Budget is \$1.7 Million, a decrease of \$100,000 from last year's budget. In meeting with the advisory committee to look at options of next year's funding, they looked at possibly cutting the evaluation. He said we do still need the evaluation, so agencies were asked to look at their budgets and what kind of data they could provide consistently and on a regular basis. The data sought is demographics and process data so we may be able to pare down the evaluation budget a little. The goal is to keep as many dollars in the program area. The next meeting is October. There will be a special order of business to the Board of Commissioners October 22, where the data will be released outlining the success of the Prevention Initiative and what the evaluation has found. In November there will be a final discussion on the budget for next year.

Matthew cautioned the group that a budget target doesn't mean that will be the appropriated budget. The County Board of Commissioners will appropriate the dollars. The final budget will be adopted at the 1st Board Meeting in December.

Discussion took place about the type of data, verification of data and monitoring of data.

5. Child Welfare Update

Matthew shared in June the potential of \$1.8 Million in cuts to the Child Welfare program in Kent County, due to a need in supplemental appropriation by DHS. Groups were established within the County to look at the referral process and the placement of children in Foster Care Residential homes, looking at ways to get the budge contained. The group met again on August 31. Previously they set a target to get 16-19 children out of residential care into foster care, which saves about \$135 per day per child, having a large impact on our budget. Thirteen children were successfully moved to foster care. This needs to be continually monitored in order to get the budget under control. They have learned there is a lack of foster homes in the community, especially for the older children.

At the meeting on August 31, they talked about recruiting foster homes and what can be done collectively to solve the issue. The Children's Rights Settlement requires kids to stay no longer than 30 days at Kids First and if there is no foster home for that child, they will be moved to residential care at \$190.00 per day. Until foster homes are available, there will be a spike in the cost of placing children.

Agency fee for foster care is \$37 per day and \$17.50 per day for the family, about \$55 per day. When asked where the State was at with the Treatment Foster Care RFQ. Matthew said there are meetings on September 24 and they expect within 30 days they will have the planning process complete. Matthew explained that Treatment Foster Care was a higher reimbursement rate at about \$100 per day.

Matthew continued saying this is a real issue because the dollars that have to be put into the formal Child Welfare system will limit the dollars that are available for the Prevention Initiative. Matthew asked if anyone had suggestions on recruiting of Foster Care homes, he welcomed them.

When asked what services could be cut, due budget cuts, Matthew said non-mandated services were the ones at risk.

Matthew added the easiest way to save money is to limit the amount of residential care.

6. State Cuts

Matthew began by reminding the committee that in the previous meetings they approved the Strong Family/Safe Children Plan and talked about moving dollars because the State gave more direction this year in limiting how we spend our dollars. The dollars we originally gave to the Health Department for Healthy Start Assessments, we did not believe we would be able to continue to fund, we decided that we would spend those dollars in service delivery through Catholic Charities and we would find more flexible funding through the Child and Family Resource Council to provide to the Health Department to continue the assessment process. Matthew said we have gotten stalled in DHS because they won't release the RFP to allow us to move dollars to Catholic Charities for the Healthy Start. The contract the Health Department had from DHS ends September 30, we have about \$20,000 at Catholic Charities for home visiting services and were hoping to add another \$50,000. That \$50,000 is going to start vanishing October 1 because the State will not move through RFPs and contracts for services at all right now.

This is not a reflection on local DHS at all. These are federal dollars the state receives that they are supposed to pass on. This is just one piece of the pie. The concern is all the appropriations will be held onto for state employees and the contracting we need in Kent County will be significantly cut. He said somehow our legislators need to understand you can't cut contract dollars.

Matthew asked for ideas or ways to advocate for something in the near term with the legislators in that priority area within the Human Services component.

Diana Sieger said she doesn't believe Bill Hardiman understands the whole contracting argument. She qualified with the example that we are talking about how we deliver services in Kent County that is different than in Wayne County. We are not looking for special treatment, but rather asking for the State to honor those contracts.

Wayman suggested putting forward more information to the Senator to help him better understand.

Candace suggested it may be a matter of simplifying our situation as a way to make our case.

Another suggestion was to position this on a per capital basis or per family basis in terms of cost savings.

Matthew like the idea of presenting our case in proportionality. We have the information needed to figure it out. He offered to put it together and send it out to the staff.

Diana said we still need to provide the message of what we are able to do and the manner in which we do here.

Wayman agreed and said the State believes Prevention programming is a luxury in Kent County.

Jack Greenfield said part of the discussion remains operating in the unknown. There are a lot of pieces we are not clear about yet in terms of budgets and funding. Some of those issues were addressed in the Executive Committee in terms of communication.

Paul Ippel said the executive group talked about how to have community conversations on what impact the cuts are going to have in this community. MSU/Cooperative Extension did an assessment with the Essential Needs Task Force previously to get some information to the community. The Executive Committee thought it might be good to take the next step, asking what are the impacts of the current budget cuts we are anticipating coming out of the state for the next fiscal year. What impact is that having on our agencies and the people we are trying to provide services to? What gaps does that create? The other part of this is, obviously there are stimulus dollars being thrown into the mix this year and next year. What are those dollars doing, how are they helping to fill the gaps and what can we do about it? Are there any adjustments we can make given the gaps and increases in

demand we are seeing, reductions in the available resources we are seeing. Are there any things we can do to make adjustments in our community that might help mitigate the impact of those things? They proposed to have a meeting on September 17, during their regular Executive Committee time to try to extend it out to a 2-hour meeting, ask the public agencies to be there and talk a little bit about what the impact this is having on them. The meeting should also include foundations to be part of the conversation and have some representatives of our agencies. They were thinking about getting David Schroeder as well as 3 or 4 other not-for-profit agencies to speak about how it is impacting their agencies, but the non-for-profit spectrum. The hope is we will get a better picture of the gaps and ways to respond to the needs.

7. **Public Comment**

Betsy Boggs said they do post-adoptive services. They are planning a training September 11 and 12 for families who work with emotionally challenged children. One of their goals is to increase the people in the community who are prepared to work with kids who have these issues. There are flyers available.

The second thing Betsy mentioned was that they received a respite grant and are hoping to work with newtwork180 and other organizations because there may be people interested in adopting a child who have significant emotional issues. This was done in collaboration with DA Blodgett.

Jack Greenfield also mentioned an event called the Recovery Palooza. It is a celebration of recovery for the community. It is a fun day at the John Ball Park Picnic area. The community is invited. There are activities this year to include a walk-run, entertainment. It is a program focusing on alcohol/drug abuse recovery program. The date is September 19th.

8. **Miscellaneous**

There was none.

9. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:18 p.m.

Next Council meeting: Tuesday, November 3, 2009, 12:00pm – 1:30pm
MSU Extension Room B