

North Dakota Children's Cabinet - Retreat

Monday, July 28, 2025

9 a.m., Central Time

North Dakota State Capitol, CTE Conference Room, Bismarck, North Dakota

Members in Attendance:

- Kimberly Jacobson
- Commissioner Pat Traynor
- Senator Michelle Axtman
- Lt. Gov. Michelle Strinden
- Superintendent Kirsten Baesler
- Janell Regimbal
- Rep. Jayme Davis
- Shawn Huss
- Russ Riel
- Senator Kathy Hogan
- Rep. Brandy Pyle
- Veronica Zietz

Members Absent:

- Justice Lisa McEvers
- Daniell Breland

Other Attendees:

- Maria Neset
- Jessica Thomasson
- Pam Sagness
- Cathy Federer
- Mary Christy
- Meghan McCann
- Jason Callahan
- Amanda Peterson
- Lisa Bjergaard

Presentation of the Final Report from the Commission on Juvenile Justice, Lisa Bjergaard

Final report per century code being shared / presented; worked with interim judiciary and juvenile justice committees along with practitioners to dive into policy and practice.

Successful in applying for system reform grant (via US DOJ) during the pandemic which was

helpful in guiding the work they were focusing on through the council on state governments.

Pages 3 – 11 expand on the condensed timeline including final recommendations. There is an opportunity to be a voice for juvenile justice within the children's cabinet. Juvenile Justice State Advisory Group (fed funding to a designated state agency (dept of corrections); Lisa Jahner would be best POC) would be a good resource going forward. Importance of time and working together between legislators and practitioners as well as interim committees accepting the work and moving forward.

Discussion re: Uniform Court Act and language that ties juvenile justice to adult code and Commission on Juvenile Justice didn't get to creating a separate juvenile code due to time restraints to fully research and develop. Can bring the commission back if there are urgent needs or unmet needs that the children's cabinet uncovers / learns about.

Sen Hogan asked about how to find membership for the Juvenile Justice Commission. Info can be found under boards and commissions; Janell will help provide links to reports from the SAG.

Discussion re: importance of working group w/in the Children's Cabinet so that their work doesn't get lost in the work that Children's Cabinet is doing. Page 13-14 includes two challenges in the forefront to focus on (variety of issues schools are facing and complaints about lack of robust network of community services). Children's Cabinet will look at adding a state juvenile specialist into one of the ad hoc working groups; Lisa Jahner would be a great voice.

Supt Baesler shared it would be good to be thinking about ways to pivot if federal funding gets paused or reviewed; recent federal funding that was paused did come through, but discussions were being had about what to do if it hadn't.

Supt Baesler shared that there is a common misunderstanding among school districts with FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and it being used as a firewall, inappropriately, and prevents school districts from understanding guidelines for reporting. School districts can, and should, be providing data; large v small schools or high school v elementary school.

Idea came up about a potential data sharing agreement between dept. of corrections, legislature, and the children's cabinet; may need to go through policy as to how it is collected, shared, etc.

Bridge system will be implemented 7/2026 and North Dakota schools will agree / confirm that data they share with NDDPI provides for NDDPI to be the main source of data sharing for grants, tracking, etc. There is resistance to this change as districts are concerned that data shared may prove that their programs that are working, aren't working, and the

program will no longer be able to continue. Mindset shift that we're making the best decisions based on the information we have; if we wait until we have all of the information from all entities, we will never have it.

Rep Pyle asked about how we gather data from private and homeschool students; private and homeschools are not required to share data because they are not part of the public school system. The focus is on 168 public schools; private schools would like to join on once they're able to (will look to do after the public schools are up and going).

Sen Hogan asked if there is good data to base decisions off of? North Dakota has new data system as of 2023 and confident that there is good data, working through what they have so that it is providing the correct info. Not readily available, but working hard to develop. Juvenile Court also publishes annual report that may be a good resource for the Children's Cabinet.

Strategic Plan Overview, Meghan McCann and Jason Callahan

- Strategic Goals
 - Strengthen foundational elements of the Children's Cabinet and promote statewide
 - Identify and elevate promising practices to advance a seamless network of services and support throughout ND
 - Define, measure, and report out on the status of child-wellbeing in ND
- Wins
 - Children's cabinet logo
 - Amendments to statute
 - Move children's cabinet to the governor's office
 - Create subcommittees
- Building Ecosystems Statewide for Thriving (BEST) Youth
 - ND included with SD, NE, KS, Missouri, IA, MN
 - ND has about 700 opportunity youth / cohort; about 2000 total
 - State challenges and needs
 - Lack of capacity to implement
 - Stakeholder alignment on effective strategies
 - Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed (project management – RACI)

Subcommittees, Maria Neset

- HB1556 (Sen Hogan) – monthly virtual meetings on the 1st Thursday of the month from 1 – 3 pm
 - 1 day face to face meeting on September 4 (agenda is built) and then have monthly zoom meetings on the 1st Thursday (2 hours)
 - Sen Kathy Hogan
 - Jessica Thomasson – notetaker
 - Pam Sagness

- Veronica Zietz
- Cathy Federer
- Janell Regimbal
- Shawn Huss
- Early Childhood (Lt Gov Strinden, Sen Axtman) – monthly meetings in person for 60 mins; two retreats / year with the Children’s Cabinet
 - Supt Kirsten Baesler
 - Lt Gov Michelle Strinden
 - Rep Jayme Davis - notetaker
 - Pat Traynor
 - Sen Michelle Axtman
 - Amanda Peterson
- Strategic Plan and Measurable Outcomes (Maria Neset) – monthly virtual meetings on the 1st Tuesday of the month from 4 – 5 pm
 - Maria Neset
 - Rep Brandy Pyle
 - Kim Jacobson
 - Russ Riehl
 - Mary Christy - notetaker

Federal Funding and Impact, Supt Baesler and Commissioner Traynor

- March 2025 President Trump signed his budget with funds supposed to be released shortly thereafter
 - OMB reviewed and the state was notified on June 30, 2025 that the review wasn’t done and funding would be withheld for the time being. Updates:
 - Title I – funds have been released
 - Remaining funds weren’t funded until July 23rd for afterschool programming / 21st Century Grants
 - \$19M were still frozen, however those funds should be released by early August and ND will be fully funded
 - Referenced good WestED article about how states will need to step up
- Medicaid
 - One Big Beautiful Bill Act impacts Medicaid with work requirements; 6-month review for eligibility (just to Medicaid expansion)
 - 12/31/2026 – adults must attend or work at least 80 hours / month
 - About half of ND expansion members are already working
 - People already meeting work requirements will NOT have to do more

- 3-5% of all Medicaid recipients will be impacted; there will be exemptions for some groups including pregnant women, frail, mental / behavioral health disorders
 - Rural health transportation grants
 - ND will be receiving up to \$500,000 million (multiple years for a total of up to \$500,000) for rural healthcare innovation and delivery
 - 108,000 average number of ND residents on all Medicaid
 - 46% are children, pregnant women, elderly
- SNAP
 - \$9.9M in SNAP benefits to an average of 50,000 individuals
 - 10/1/2025 – work requirement exemptions could impact up to 10% of recipients; will need to provide documentation they are meeting work requirements
 - Adults 55 – 64 without dependents and adults with children over 14 are not automatically exempt
 - Individuals who are homeless, veterans who are homeless, and some youth need to show they are impacted / need services
 - Refugees, SIV, asylees no longer automatically eligible; formerly exempt geographies no longer available (Turtle Mountain)
 - Previously 100% federally funded; will start to shift based on payment error rate. If a state has an error rate over a certain threshold, the state will need to pick up the cost
 - ND below national average

Next Steps, Maria Neset

- Maria and Mary will work with chairs for the three subcommittees to notice hearings, upload agenda, etc.
- Next Children's Cabinet meeting is set for Tuesday, August 19th from 4 – 5 pm and will be virtual