

**North Dakota Children's Cabinet  
Tuesday, August 19, 2025  
4 p.m., Central Time  
Microsoft Teams**

**Members in Attendance:**

- Ms. Kimberly Jacobson
- Senator Michelle Axtman
- Lieutenant Governor Michelle Strinden
- Superintendent Kirsten Baesler
- Ms. Janell Regimbal
- Representative Jayme Davis
- Mr. Shawn Huss
- Mr. Russ Riehl
- Senator Kathy Hogan
- Representative Brandy Pyle
- Ms. Veronica Zietz
- Justice Lisa McEvers
- Ms. Daniell Breland

**Members Absent:**

- Commissioner Pat Traynor

**Other Attendees:**

- Ms. Maria Neset
- Ms. Jessica Thomasson
- Ms. Cathy Federer
- Ms. Meghan McCann
- Mr. Jason Callahan
- Ms. Amanda Peterson

Meeting called to order at 4:01 p.m. on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, by the Chair Senator Michelle Axtman

Senator Hogan moved to approve the North Dakota Children's Cabinet agenda. Ms. Zietz seconded. The motion to approve the agenda carried.

Superintendent Baesler moved to approve the minutes from the North Dakota Children's Cabinet Retreat on Monday, July 28, 2025. Ms. Jacobson seconded. The motion to approve the minutes carried.

### **Discuss logistics for subcommittees**

- **Public notice reminders**
  - A public, paper notice of our meetings must be done, and it will need to be posted out of the host office (Governor's office) and / or physical location of your meeting if it is in person.
  - Please keep Ms. Christy informed of your meeting dates, times, and locations as she will draft the public notices to be posted.
- **In person meeting reimbursement**
  - Depending on the location where you are meeting, that may make a member eligible (or not eligible) for reimbursement. For example, if you hosted the meeting in the Bismarck/Mandan area, Members are not always eligible for certain reimbursements.
  - Reimbursements can be sent to Ms. Christy by email
- **Transcription option through teams**
  - The recording and transcription option through Teams is highly recommended, whether you meet in person or virtually.
  - Will be adjusting minutes as we learn – replace individual names with “member” so that everyone can feel comfortable being open and honest during our meetings is one example. Open to other suggestions as well.
  - Ms. Neset and Ms. Christy are available to help with any questions.
- **Sharing of meeting minutes – open meeting law**
  - Chair Axtman and Ms. Neset are working with the North Dakota Attorney General's office to provide additional training relating to open meetings later this fall.
  - Refer to the OM-Guide document which outlines logistics and main pieces of open meetings laws
- **Access to Microsoft Teams channel**
  - Asking all members to make sure they can access the Microsoft Teams channel. If you haven't seen it or haven't received an invitation, please let Ms. Neset or Ms. Christy know.
  - Folders are also being added for the Children's Cabinet and subcommittees to help keep things organized such as meeting agendas and minutes, handouts, and attachments.
- **Update on budget for Children's Cabinet**
  - The Governor's office does have a line-item budget for the Children's Cabinet. A revised contract with the Forum for Youth initiative has been finalized that guarantees the Forum to be the Children's Cabinet partner, provide technical assistance, and deliverables that support the work being done.

Discussion regarding subcommittee meetings and assistance from the Forum. Ms. McCann and Mr. Callahan are available to review draft agendas for subcommittees and provide additional feedback.

### **Discuss yearlong plan for Children's Cabinet**

- Children's Cabinet vision talks about the CC ensuring that all children are prepared and successful, equipped with skills, knowledge, and resilience to thrive in an ever-changing world. How do we define these things, what does this mean?
- Questions to keep in mind: Why are we doing this? How are we going to do it? How do things play out on a local / regional level? Is birth – 21 inclusive enough?
- The Forum is working on bylaws so the cabinet operates in a standardized / uniform / structured capacity and will get to Strategic Plan Subcommittee in September.
- **How do we define “child well-being”; Learn from partners about developmental milestones, key areas such as school, etc.; Clarify terminology across all systems; Determine data that will help to drive child well-being metrics**
  - Before we create a list of resources in our network of services, we might want to consider how we define “child well-being” in North Dakota. This can anchor us as we look / identify those resources. Discussion that maybe we look at what “child well-being” is NOT and this can help us come up with metrics to reduce the number of children who exhibit X v. an aspirational goal. For example, chronically absent children – what do we need to do to ensure they are not chronically absent?
  - Importance of having a definitive medical metric to measure progress of our definition of increasing wellness in the state. What is our baseline? What is our instrument? How are we going to measure progress? Do the metrics exist? How do we want to organize? What terms do we want to find consensus on? There won't be just one measure of child well-being. It won't be a fast process as it's a broad conversation for the full Children's Cabinet to feel comfortable where the Strategic Plan Subcommittee is going.
  - Strategic Goal #1 focused on the functions, bylaws, voting, rules, etc. for the Cdchildren's Cabinet (via the Strategic Plan Subcommittee) and Goals #2 and #3 fall to the other subcommittees (HB1556 and Early Childhood). Focus on how we all function as one unit.
  - We will want deliverables before the next legislative session. Tentative timeframe through October, have the Children's Cabinet focus on setting the foundation, build out our vision, and take to the public; November – January test and see if we missed anything; February – April makes sure we have the metrics, make sure we're on track, and take back to stakeholders as we finalize going into August 2026.
  - Agreement that the timeline is aggressive, but good. Lean on the Forum and their expertise / experience in other states, can help guide us through the process and what we want ND to look like. Forum will start big and include

as much food for thought as we want. The group can come back and narrow down as appropriate / needed.

- If any Members have ideas of structures or metrics, please share with Mr. Callahan and Ms. McCann so they can start collecting and seeing if we're going in the right direction.

### **Subcommittee share out**

- **First scheduled meeting date**

- Strategic Plan Subcommittee
  - First meeting was August 12. We're looking at how we support the Children's Cabinet as a whole but also the subcommittees.
  - The Forum has drafted bylaws for the subcommittee to consider as to how we operate internally and respond more publicly.
  - Discussion on public feedback, getting out into communities, engaging in conversations. The Subcommittee will be coming up with a process for subcommittees to take and run with if they choose to.
  - Meeting cadence is the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the Month with our next meeting on September 2<sup>nd</sup>
- HB1556 Subcommittee
  - September 5<sup>th</sup> will be their first meeting, planning for an all-day, face-to-face meeting in Bismarck. The Chair will work with the Forum to help frame details in looking at the kind of infrastructures of the various systems, what they're doing with children with serious persistent mental illness or problems, behaviors.
  - The Chair is looking for feedback as it is being considered having both state policy person and local representatives who are assigned to those areas present an overview of their infrastructure, systems, and definitions. This will frame the questions to help with the work for the rest of the day (first part will be education).
- Early Childhood Subcommittee
  - The first meeting is scheduled for September 22 and meeting cadence moving forward will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month.
  - The Chair is working on the agenda and planning on getting a snapshot / data that was done by an organization(s) that has the groundwork of where we're at right now with early childhood systems.
  - A Member has spoken with early development with DHHS and setting up tours with early childhood programs that are best in class and personal tours (in school, outside of school, daycare facilities) throughout the eastern side of the state in September.

- **Other updates**

- Discussion and clarification that Children's Cabinet members will always be members; co-chairs are able to invite ad hoc members, external resources to participate in and / or attend meetings.

**Closing remarks**

- Next Children's Cabinet meeting: Tuesday, September 16 @ 4pm on Microsoft Teams

Meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m. on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, by the Chair Senator Michelle Axtman