

North Dakota Children's Cabinet – Strategic Plan Subcommittee Meeting
Tuesday, August 12, 2025
4 p.m., Central Time
Microsoft Teams

Members Present:

- Ms. Daniell Breland
- Ms. Kim Jacobson
- Justice Lisa McEvers
- Mr. Russ Riehl

Members Absent:

- Representative Brandy Pyle

Other Attendees:

- Ms. Maria Neset
- Ms. Meghan McCann
- Mr. Jason Callahan
- Ms. Mary Christy

Ms. Jacobson moved to approve the Minutes from July 28, 2025. Mr. Riehl seconded. The motion to approve the minutes was approved.

Facilitation of Strategic Goal #1

Discussion on how do we professionalize the children's cabinet (CC) and how does that play into the subcommittee work? Want to make sure there are similar processes and operations that are consistent for the larger cabinet and three subcommittees.

Members shared we have some good momentum and footprint to help us move forward in an impactful way. At the retreat in July, we had an opportunity to meet as a subgroup and discuss where we see our strategic plan going. There was a discussion on operations and how we function as subcommittees and the greater cabinet. We want to make sure the chairs are supported at the subcommittee level to drive forth the work being done. We also need to be aware of reporting to the legislature (and outside groups), sharing milestones in a way that bring credibility, respect, dependability, and visibility to the CC so we can make the strongest impact possible.

During the retreat, we had three goals that originally landed in the draft strategic plan and we need to continue fine tuning and focus on the operations of what needs to get done / prioritize.

Our why is North Dakota CC ensures that all children are prepared and successful, equipped to thrive in the world.

Three goals in our strategic plan:

- Strengthen foundational elements – operational; how do we do business as the CC?
- Identify and elevate promising practices to advance a seamless network of services and supports
- Define, measure, and support the status of child well-being

How do we break these down into key actions / measurable outcomes?

Discussion on Goal #1 and four proposed goals:

- Develop bylaws to govern internal and external processes – this subcommittee would drive the work, but CC would be accountable. Can dig into who needs to be consulted and who is informing or needs to be informed of the work. Outputs would include: bylaws, standard elevator pitch, comms plan, meeting and schedule deliverables.
- Develop and implement a branding and communication strategy
- Regular schedule and calendar of deliverables
 - By September of 2025: identified 3 subcommittees (accomplished), but may need to include what is being delivered and what is the timeline
- Making sure we're clearly understanding the population served (0 – 21), why it is our focus area, does this exclude any outcomes (individuals 21+ re: employment, education outcomes as it relates to child well-being / thriving), key transition stages. Importance of defining this so when we're engaging with stakeholders across the state, our message is consistent.

Members discussed that goal #1 is the right call for the subcommittee to start with; can solidify some of the pieces before expanding into goals 2 and 3. All three subcommittees brought up / discussed how we establish or create a protocol that can support the CC and subcommittees to go out and structure an effective conversations. Importance of setting up a successful process that the three subcommittees can replicate.

Agreement that a template is appropriate as we cross section to other groups, for example the Juvenile Justice SAG. If they're interested in the work being done, how do we share / engage in a consistent, effective manner? Everyone here serves or is a part of a group that may be interested in the work being done here or sharing the work they are doing as it may help / impact the CC. How do we support other groups who are also looking for the

appropriate space to share with the CC? How do we capture the information, what do we do with it?

Member question regarding goal 1, who is physically going to do the work? Is that something we should all submit something? Draft sent out and subcommittee edits?

The Forum for Youth Initiative will put together a draft from outline that they have. Foundationally, we don't want to create rules just to create them; intent is to receive draft from the Forum for the group to react to, refine, and provide as a recommendation to full CC to approve, give feedback on, etc.

This subgroup has a charge (as do the others) with the larger CC. Goal #1 is priority for this subcommittee to professionalize the foundational elements and process and operations of how the full CC will operate. We will want to define, identify, and settle on Goal #1 and the move forward with how goal 2 and 3 can be accomplished through the other subcommittees and full CC.

Other subcommittees doing work that will impact goals 2 and 3 such as defining child well-being, curating gold standard / best practices for ND. Goal 1 will help set forth how we operate as the CC.

Member question regarding all three goals having a due date of September 2025, is that attainable?

Discussion on goals / timelines. Goal 1.1 could be a quick turnaround (develop bylaws) based on the work that has already been done; can send out a draft to everyone and provide a couple weeks for review before we all meet again in September.

1.2 would depend on what level of comms plan we want. Do we want someone to do those for us (would include RFP's), what would our budget be, or do we consider something more internal? Discussion that we may need to bump this goal to next August.

1.3 we just need to define how we're going to collect the work, processes for how committees communicate. We can adjust this due date / timeline as well.

Communication and branding probably not as urgent as other pieces. We have a start on 1.3 as far as subcommittees and frequency of meetings.

As it relates to 1.3 and 1.4, these start to blur together with how do we define well-being, how do we measure well-being. It will be huge to figure out what tool / system we use to capture the data, the conversations, and if it will have an impact on future legislation.

Will look to refine and share draft bylaws in October to continue moving forward; would be good for all members to have access to the draft to be able to review and discuss.

Members discussion regarding defining child well-being, who should be defining and setting those goals? The entire cabinet should be involved in that discussion.

Follow-up discussion about catchphrases that we all use and how those may be interpreted. Depending on which lane you are in, you may interpret it differently. May be worthwhile to discuss so we are all on the same page; establish from the CC's perspective, when we use a term, what do we mean, and can it be carried through to workgroups and outside entities so that we're all talking the same language.

Additional discussion on definitions of well-being for pre-k, grades 1 – 5, etc. We can hear what each subcommittee or member thinks. Talk academics and behaviors, court referrals, human service zone data, focus on one child or the whole slice, what will be the focus? If we can define the age group and then the discussion can focus the elements of each age group.

Full CC should be involved discussions re: what the transitional periods are with the ability to charge subcommittees with follow up work. Will need to visit whose charge is it to take the lead, visit with our stakeholders and interested groups? This could be done through listening sessions with each subcommittee (if appropriate) to gather external feedback. Will also want to consider how we handle external resources, set a cadence for annual reports, transparency.

There are some groups legislatively directed to report to CC by established dates. We should have a directory of the groups / deadlines and determine the format or how the report will be reviewed.

Next Steps

The Forum for Youth Initiative

- Draft bylaws and get those to Strategic Planning Subcommittee by the end of the week
 - One question that is important is what are we attempting to solve? Group agreed governance (internal / external; how we communicate; what the monthly agenda should be), internal process of the cabinet, voting
 - Standardize the process so that the next person serving on the CC has a framework as to how it operated and functioned, guidance for the future
 - All agreed we do not want the bylaws to be a barrier for the CC to get work done. More strength based v. deficiency based focus; arms around approach v. disciplinary or divisive.
 - For now, focus is on more internal facing so they can be used as a resource or guiding document for the CC

Ms. Neset and Ms. Christy confirm dates (subcommittee 1st Tuesday; full CC 3rd Tuesday)

- CC – 3rd Tuesday of the Month
 - Tues, Aug 19
 - Tues, Sept 16
 - Tues, Oct 21
 - Tues, Nov 18
 - Tues, Dec 16
- Subcommittee – 1st Tuesday of the Month
 - Tues, Sept 2
 - Tues, Oct 7
 - Tues, Nov 4
 - Tues, Dec 2

Ms. Neset working to get clarity on sending out information by email and if that is a violation of public notices; did get clarity on public comments, this new requirement does not impact CC and no requirement for public comments at subcommittee or CC meetings.