

Marking Our Progress: Moving Forward Together for Clark County's Children

Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission

Final Report

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INTRODUCTION

The Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission

The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Diagnostic Center is a technical assistance (TA) resource for state, local and tribal policymakers seeking to implement data-driven strategies to combat crime and improve public safety in their communities. The defining characteristic of the Diagnostic Center is its approach to being smart on crime by helping state and local leaders use local data to apply what works in criminal justice in their communities. As such, Diagnostic Center engagements are intended to build community capacity to use data to make short- and long-term evidence-based decisions about criminal justice and public safety. This report was prepared in fulfillment of a training and technical assistance (TTA) request on behalf of the Clark County Blue Ribbon for Kids (BRK) Commission (herein referred to as "*the Commission*") to support the implementation of recommendations identified in the *Moving Forward Together for Clark County's Children* report of March 2015.

The Commission was established because the leadership of state, county and city government, the courts, the child welfare agency and professional and community stakeholder groups all recognized that Clark County could do a better job of ensuring children are safe and growing up in permanent families that can enhance their well-being. The Commission was formed to make recommendations that would generate feasible plans of action to implement lasting and needed reforms in the child dependency system to improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of Clark County's children and strengthen public confidence in the system.

The Commission is comprised of leadership from all of the major stakeholders in the Clark County child welfare system and community and is chaired by Justice Nancy Saitta of the Nevada Supreme Court. Commission members represent a variety of constituencies in, and perspectives on, the dependency system. The Commission began meeting on October 7, 2014 to determine how to improve Clark County's child welfare system to better protect the county's most vulnerable citizens. Commission members committed to taking a child-focused approach and to pursue action-oriented solutions. The Commission's approach drew on both empirical evidence and actual experience and was undertaken in a spirit of partnership with government and the many organizations and community stakeholders that work together in child welfare. Specifically, the Commission was charged with reviewing current practices and policies of the child dependency system in Clark County, identifying organizational and practice barriers to child safety, timely case processing, permanency and well-being for children, and based upon that review, developing recommendations to implement needed reforms in Clark County.

The Commission is committed to:

- Improving the ability of state and local agencies and the courts to work together to more quickly secure safe, permanent homes for foster children and, at the same time, reduce the need for foster care.
- Improving and expanding existing collaborative frameworks among all those who have responsibility for the safety, permanency and well-being of children in the dependency system and those children at risk for involvement in the system.

- Developing strategies for applying resources in more flexible, timely and comprehensive ways to support at-risk children and families.
- Ensuring children and families have a say in decisions that affect their lives.
- Implementing evidence-based best practices to improve the child dependency system’s performance at meeting the needs of vulnerable children and families.
- Enhancing the trust and confidence of the public in the child dependency system.

Based upon a significant review of data about current system performance and outcomes, as well as obtaining feedback from system professionals and consumers of the system about their experiences, the Commission concluded that a transformation of the current child dependency system in Clark County was needed. They further concluded that this reform must not be undertaken in silos, but rather as a coordinated effort and partnership among the courts, child welfare agency, city, county and state governments and community partners with a shared commitment and vision. Adopting this collaborative approach to systemwide improvement, the Commission generated several recommendations and improvement strategies for dependency system reform that were published in a final report entitled “*Moving Forward Together for Clark County’s Children.*”¹

The Commission’s recommendations cover seven strategic focus areas:

1. Improved reasonable efforts and child safety decision-making;
2. Reform of the child welfare agency process;
3. Reform of the court process;
4. Ensure meaningful representation and voice in the process from the initiation of proceedings;
5. Improve selection, retention, training and ongoing professional development for all system stakeholders;
6. Increase efforts aimed at public education; and
7. Collaborate effectively for sustainable, long-lasting and overarching systemic reform.

OJP Diagnostic Center Support

Given the multi-agency effort and need for a strategic implementation process, the Commission requested the assistance of subject matter experts (SMEs) and a third party to assist in efforts to maintain objectivity. Specifically, the Commission requested and received TA from the DOJ, OJP Diagnostic Center to provide subject matter support to the Commission to evaluate and prioritize recommendations made from the *Moving Forward Together for Clark County’s Children* report. Working with Diagnostic Center TA and SMEs, the Commission embarked on an implementation stage, using the recommendations and strategies from the *Moving Forward Together for Clark County’s Children* report as a roadmap for court and systemwide stakeholders to work together to make each of the recommendations a reality. Multidisciplinary subcommittees of the Commission were formed to work on a specific strategic focus recommendation area (some of the implementation strategies were combined and assigned to a subcommittee because of cross-over or duplication in subcommittee membership). To ensure accountability and to facilitate progress reporting, each subcommittee included a member (or members) of the Commission.

¹ Please see the full report of the Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission (2015) for detail about the rationale behind the recommendations and supporting implementation strategies.

Table 1 summarizes the key support areas, goals and support received from the OJP Diagnostic Center.

Table 1. OJP TA Support Areas, Goals and Support

Diagnostic center TA to the Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission		
TA SUPPORT AREA	TA Goals	Diagnostic Center Support
RECOMMENDATION PRIORITIES	Identify key stakeholders and establish core subcommittees or working groups; align those working groups to strategic focus areas	Provided SMEs to identify stakeholder leads from each agency and provide expertise on prioritizing recommendations
DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLANS	Action planning conference calls and meetings with each subcommittee to develop action plans to guide implementation of recommendations	Provided subject matter experts and logistical support to facilitate action planning with each subcommittee
IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PLANS	Determine TTA resource requirements for action plan implementation	Provide guidance on action plan implementation while identifying potential implementation assistance

As summarized below, key Diagnostic Center support activities included:

- **Identifying and Establishing Subcommittees.** The Diagnostic Center team recommended a subcommittee working group structure with an assigned leader or co-leader and representation from all of the key stakeholder groups necessary for successful implementation of the recommended strategic focus areas. Between March and April 2015, the Diagnostic Center supported telephonic meetings for Commission members to identify additional stakeholders to be appointed to subcommittees. The Commissioner Chair evaluated all recommendations and appointed key stakeholders to subcommittee working groups, announced on May 29, 2015.
- **Developing Recommendation Priorities and Strategic Focus Areas.** Prioritized each recommendation in the Commission’s final report for action planning based on complexity and interdependency of actions. Because of overlap (e.g., some strategies could align under multiple recommendations), subcommittee strategic focus areas were combined or reorganized to better facilitate the action planning process.
- **Implementing Action Planning.** Between May and July 2015, the Diagnostic Center held implementation-planning conference calls with each Subcommittee Chair to review recommendation priorities, validate strategic focus areas and discuss data collection requirements and anticipated action items. Subcommittee Chairs divided tasks among members and conducted various tasks in preparation for the Action Planning Sessions.
- **Supporting Action Planning Sessions.** The Diagnostic Center provided ongoing logistical, facilitation and SME support to enable subcommittees to work through each recommendation, hold meaningful discussion and identify action items. Diagnostic Center SMEs contributed to discussions and requests regarding national model practices, training and technical assistance opportunities.

Key Phases of the Commission's Work

Key phases of the Commission's work included:

- Development of a shared vision, mission, values and guiding principles to direct the Commission's work and resulting recommendations.
- Meetings with professional and community stakeholders, including former foster youth, to solicit their input about strengths and challenges faced by the current child welfare system.
- Review of context and performance data about Nevada's and Clark County's child welfare system and outcomes for children and families.
- Review of evidence-based practice programs, policies and practices that have yielded positive outcomes for children and families for possible adaptation and implementation in Clark County.
- Development and dissemination of recommendations for reform and associated implementation strategies.
- Establishment of multidisciplinary subcommittees or working groups to engage in strategic action planning around each of the Commission's recommendations.
- Implementation of reform strategies to improve outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system, including ongoing monitoring of progress and design of evaluation methods to determine effectiveness of reform strategies.

Implementation Progress Report

Once formed, each subcommittee convened a series of meetings with SMEs participating by conference call (or in-person) to engage in strategic action planning for each recommendation's implementation. Work included:

- Outlining the specific action items; prioritizing those actions.
- Identifying the next steps necessary to achieve the recommended change and strategy's implementation.
- Establishing short- and long-term deadlines and milestones for the achievement of each step.
- Assigning responsible individuals to oversee implementation.
- Identifying process and outcome measures for each specific strategy.
- Identifying evaluation strategies to determine the success of the recommendations on improved safety, permanency, due process and fairness, timeliness and child well-being outcomes.

Subcommittees reported their efforts to the BRK Commission. The Commission then held a series of public meetings to disseminate information regarding each subcommittee's progress on achieving implementation of each reform recommendation.

The work of the subcommittees and the Commission is ongoing. Much progress has occurred, but more work is needed. This report summarizes the progress made to date implementing the Commission's recommendations, including a listing of key achievements. Tables in the next section summarize each BRK

subcommittee's work, noting the progress made thus far at accomplishing goals, what remains to be accomplished and is currently underway, and expected outcomes when goals are ultimately achieved.²

² For any task still remaining or underway, the BRK subcommittees noted who (or what entity) is responsible for task completion and identified a timeline for completing each remaining task. For ease of presentation, these additional details have been omitted from this report.

SUMMARY OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Each multidisciplinary subcommittee continues to work with its members to carry forward the recommendations of the Commission. Listed below is a summary of major milestones achieved in all areas of the Commission's focus.

- Implemented the *Title IV-E waiver program* to provide increased safety services in the home with the goal of reducing the need for child removal and placement into foster care.
- Rolled-out and conducted Department of Family Services (DFS) staff training in the *Safety Intervention and Permanency System (SIPS)* case management practice model to ensure the Department is servicing children that are unsafe and that necessary services are in place to ensure increased protective capacity of a parent or parents.
- Implemented a one family-one judge case assignment and calendaring system to improve quality and consistency in decision-making, while upholding parties' due process—six judicial officers now have cases from start to finish (formerly only three judicial officers heard the cases).
- Conducted training for the judiciary on best practices in handling child abuse and neglect cases, the *Safety Intervention and Permanency System (SIPS)* case management practice model and reasonable efforts decision-making.
- Gave courts the ability to generate orders electronically at the conclusion of hearings, providing parties with immediate access to the court's findings, which facilitates timely case processing and parent and family engagement.
- Assigned a Presiding Juvenile Dependency Court Judge to increase accountability and consistency across courtrooms, as well as to provide leadership for the dependency court system.
- Established a Rules Committee that is currently developing specific rules of procedure for juvenile dependency cases.
- Increased the number of attorneys assigned to represent parents earlier in the child abuse and neglect hearing process (i.e., before or at the Preliminary Protective Hearing).
- Established a standard protocol that children's attorneys (Children Attorney's Project (CAP) attorneys) are now present at each initial preliminary protective hearing to ensure timely appointment of counsel and due process for all children.
- Developed performance measures to evaluate the representation practice of parents' attorneys, children's attorneys, district attorneys and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to track performance and design any necessary practice and policy improvements.
- Completed a thorough review and assessment of current training provided to all child welfare system partners, mapped out training capacities and gaps as well as opportunities for better efficiencies and partnerships, and used this information to develop a comprehensive plan for improved training for all child welfare partners.
- Developed a *Comprehensive Case Lifespan Flow Chart* that shows the entire child abuse and neglect process to increase public understanding of the child abuse and neglect system.
- Developed a successful faith outreach and adoption recruitment campaign through the partnership between Mayor's Faith Initiative and the DFS. Over 100 faith communities worked closely with DFS to cultivate the message and promote the *Wait No More: Finding Families for Nevada's Waiting Children Event*. As a result of outreach effort, approximately 400 people from over 100 churches united to raise awareness and recruit for adoptive families. Over 100 people stepped forward to

begin the adoption process, with 84 people fingerprinted and another 25 to return to complete the process. This was the first event of this magnitude in Nevada.

- Collaborated with the Clark County School District (CCSD) and DFS to ensure *Foster Care Advocates* are assigned to every school so that students in foster care, (as well as their caseworkers, foster parents and team), have a designated school-based foster care liaison. Also ensured that CCSD will develop *Academic Plans* for all foster care students (i.e., elementary, middle and high school).
- Developed comprehensive Strategic Messaging and Outreach Action Plans for the recruitment and retention of foster parents and CASA as well as for prevention services.
- Designed a new placement application (or app) to improve matching of children to available caregiver placements and to reduce the need for congregate care.
- Adopted and began implementation of normal childhood standards for children in foster care to ensure they have access to the normal activities and childhood experiences.
- Established new policies clarifying the licensing of relatives have been established. No longer will relatives be overlooked as placement options because of a remote criminal background issue that does not impact the best interests of a child.
- Finalized the eligibility criteria, subsidy issuance, and other related policies of subsidized guardianship to increase relative placements. Federal approval was subsequently granted, and the subsidized guardianship program launched. Provided training on the program to judges, attorneys, and the DFS.
- Created a more streamlined delivery of services to former foster youth by consolidating the AB350 program and the Step-Up Program and made access by the youth easier. Created a one-stop office/drop-in center that is centrally located and that is comforting, inviting and youth-oriented.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

BRK Subcommittee #1

Recommendation: Improved Reasonable Efforts and Child Safety Decision-Making

Table 2. BRK Subcommittee #1

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress so Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
1) Improved focus on reasonable efforts decision-making by both the child welfare agency and the court.	Conducted training for judiciary around reasonable efforts.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More case-specific inquiries around reasonable efforts. • More specific reasonable efforts findings in judicial orders at each hearing. • Improved safety, timeliness, permanency and well-being outcomes.
2) Use of in-home services to avoid removal when safe.	Implemented the Title IV-E waiver program.	Training of safety service providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of IV-E money to provide safety services in the home will reduce the need for child removal and placement into foster care. • Long-term goal is to serve 480 families and their children safely in the home by June 2017.
	Discussion and recommendations of services needed by families in our community.	Complete an inventory and assessment of what services are currently available in the community and what services are needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive index of all available services in the community that can be used to support in-home placements.
		Discussion around the areas of need and determination of the possibility of building those services in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services that are identified as needed will be built within the community to better support families.
3) Continued implementation of the Safety Intervention and Permanency System (SIPS) case management practice model.	Implementation and monitoring of the SIPS Model, including department-wide rollout of front-end training on the Model.	Train remaining geographic sites and specialty units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full implementation of the SIPS Model by the end of 2016, with the DFS completely trained in SIPS. • Implementing SIPS will ensure the department is servicing children that are unsafe and that necessary services are in place to ensure increased protective

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress so Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
4) Ensure relatives and fictive kin have preferential rights to a child pursuant to Nevada Law.	Created a workgroup to conduct a thorough review state and federal law, local and state policy and procedures. Established new policies clarifying the licensing of relatives. [Overlap recommendation with BRK #7; see further discussion under that Subcommittee].	Complete a statewide policy on non-safety related waivers for placement and licensing of relatives.	capacity of a parent or parents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear policy will be in place that is consistent statewide. The policy will outline what is a non-safety issue and what consideration may be made by the state administrator when approving a waiver.
		Provide relatives with a guide on how to request licensure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased relative placements by empowering relatives with the knowledge of how to request a foster care license to obtain financial assistance.
		By the 2017 legislative session, introduce legislation to address needs identified by the review of policy and procedures and to clarify some of the preference.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased relative placements by clarifying the preference in the law around placement and safety related issues.

BRK Subcommittee #2

Recommendation: Reform of the Child Welfare Agency Process

Table 3. BRK Subcommittee #2

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
1) Restructure caseworker assignments to appoint a permanency worker in each case as soon as possible and continue to maintain manageable caseloads.	Assessed current status of statewide SIPS model implementation and caseworker caseload ratios.	Develop a <i>Judicial Safety Decision-Making SIPS Implementation Plan</i> to include SIPS training for all judicial partners (court, DFS, DA, SPD, CAP, CASA, Conflict Attorneys). Training will outline how safety model impacts decisions at every juncture of the dependency hearing. The Implementation Plan will include: 1) a one-day SIPS Overview course for all parties offered by ACTION; and 2) A Judicial Safety Decision-Making plan to include four modules of training and debriefing (i.e., to assess, evaluate and discuss application and fidelity of safety model vis-à-vis judicial decision-making) for each judicial team (i.e., six judicial teams led by the judicial officer and comprised of the respective attorneys, CASA and DFS manager assigned to that judicial officer).	Multidisciplinary cross-training in the statewide SIPS model will ensure that each of the child welfare system partners (i.e., court, DFS, DA, SPD, CAP, CASA, Conflict Attorneys) are speaking the same language when it comes to making critical safety decisions about the child. Key outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding and application of commonly used terms associated with child safety intervention (i.e., present danger, impending danger, etc.). • Increased interdisciplinary respect through judicial team decision-making and collaboration. • Increased understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the interacting disciplines. • Improved communication based upon a shared conceptual framework and lexicon.
	Brought NV youth service provider into subcommittee team.		
	Reviewed metrics needed to measure family engagement, evaluation of the Title IV-E waiver implementation and permanency model roll-out.		
	Reviewed SIPS model to understand roles of Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) Specialist (current model) vs Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigator and timing of how soon permanency workers can be assigned.		
	Held joint BRK subcommittee #2 and #5 meeting to discuss system partner training on SIPS model in order to apply SIPS concepts at every juncture of dependency hearings.		
	Conducted joint teleconference among the three child welfare agency directors to establish a timeframe and discuss identification of potential funding streams for a study to evaluate the ratio of CPS investigator in light		

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	of statewide practice model and the caseloads of permanency workers to determine appropriate alignment.		investigator ratios and caseloads of permanency workers.
2A) Explore all available funding and other resources to develop a comprehensive and effective service array that can be realistically accessible to families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sufficient community and home-based services 	Completed a review and feedback process on the Title IV-E waiver program document that outlines plans for the use of funds to determine availability for community and home-based services and to provide action plan to guide this strategy.	<p>A statewide comprehensive service array needs assessment (as several needs to tie mental health and human services, which are state-funded issues).</p> <p>Align information from comprehensive service array needs assessment with BRK subcommittee #6 Comprehensive Case Lifespan Flowchart, which will include interactive links identifying community resources allowing the public to have this information at their fingertips.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive service array needs assessment will identify what resources, services and support are available to the community. Ultimately, this information can be used to provide ready access to more (and comprehensive) services to children and families. • Judges will have a broader array of services to call upon to enhance the effectiveness of case plans. • Improved safety, permanency and well-being outcomes.
2B) Explore all available funding and other resources to develop a comprehensive and effective service array that can be realistically accessible to families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify current faith-based and community service providers to assess gaps. 	<p>Reviewed Child Welfare League of America’s Blue Print for National Standards for faith-based service providers.</p> <p>Reviewed DFS list of contractual providers and Children’s Advocacy Alliance community resource list.</p>	<p>Collaborate with BRK #6 regarding its faith outreach and partnership efforts to bridge the service array gap through Interfaith Strategic Planning between DFS, the Mayor’s Faith Initiative and Interfaith Leaders (currently being developed by BRK Subcommittee #6).</p> <p>Collaborate with BRK #6 to address overlap as to the need for a comprehensive service array.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families will have improved knowledge of, and ready access to, a comprehensive and effective service array that includes faith-based and community service providers. • Judges will have a broader array of services to call upon to enhance the effectiveness of case plans. • Improved safety, permanency and well-being outcomes.
3A) A thorough examination of the skill level and training of all child welfare agency staff and the effectiveness of the	Completed a review of the current status of the Child Welfare Academy Training Model.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved skill levels, competencies and effectiveness for all staff – individually and collectively and from entry level to management.

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
current managerial structure - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Child Welfare Academy Training Model. 	Teleconference with BRK #5 to facilitate information sharing and collaboration (#5 tasked with examining “Selection, Retention, Training, and Ongoing Professional Development for all Stakeholders.”	Continued collaboration with BRK #5 with ongoing report outs.	
3B) A thorough examination of the skill level and training of all child welfare agency staff and the effectiveness of the current managerial structure - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an internal review of current managerial structure 	Reviewed and discussed the potential data points from the geozone performance evaluation.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved skill levels, competencies and effectiveness for all staff – individually and collectively and from entry level to management.
Teleconference with BRK #5 to facilitate information sharing and collaboration (#5 tasked with examining “Selection, Retention, Training, and Ongoing Professional Development for all Stakeholders.” BRK #5 examined strategies for implementing professionalism standards as part of their assigned strategic focus area. BRK #5 is also building statewide child welfare training competencies for new hires, ongoing staff and supervision, which are built into their recommendation to include foundational competencies as part of all DFS staff (including supervisors and management training).	Coordinate with BRK #5, with updates provided for ongoing assessment.		

BRK Subcommittee #3
Recommendation: Reform of the Court Process

Table 4. BRK Subcommittee #3

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
<p>1) Additional and/or realignment of judicial resources -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a one family/one judge-judicial officer case assignment and calendaring system. • Reduce judicial officer caseloads. 	<p>Implemented one family/one-judge case assignment and calendaring system; all cases have been reassigned and/or realigned so that one judicial officer has the case from start to finish; doubled the number of judges available to hear cases from start to finish. Implementation involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing technological capability for case assignment. • Evaluating reassignment of masters (quasi-judicial officers) for realignment to one judge. • Rebuilding court’s calendar system to accommodate changes. • Reassigning cases to the one-judge/judicial officer case management and calendaring system. 	<p>Evaluate the implementation of one-judge/one family; tweak the implementation as needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent judicial decision-making in child abuse and neglect cases • Decreased delay in timeliness of court process • Judges becoming thoroughly familiar with the needs of the children and families that appear before them (e.g., the agencies’ and families’ efforts over time made to address those needs and the complexity of each family’s situation). • Increased quality of the court’s and system’s response to children and families (i.e., improved safety, timeliness, due process, permanency and well-being outcomes).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of a Presiding Juvenile Dependency Judge. 	<p>Appointed a Presiding Juvenile Dependency Court Judge.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presiding judge ensures consistency among the judges/judicial officers by establishing uniform rules of practice and procedure that will guarantee that the process of the cases and rules of practice will be consistent across all courtrooms.
<p>2) Implement evidence-based and promising practices -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) <i>Resource Guidelines</i> and judicial bench 	<p>Obtained funding from Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Program (NVCIP) for judicial training on <i>Resource Guidelines</i> best practices for handling child abuse and neglect cases and using the NCJFCJ Bench Cards as tools to improve hearing practice. Using local and national faculty, trained the judiciary</p>	<p>Design and schedule follow-up training as needed to reinforce learning and to examine additional topics of importance to judicial practice. Evaluate the effectiveness of judicial training at improving hearing practice and the impact of training on case process and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each hearing will be thorough (address all required issues). • Each hearing will provide due process of law. • Court orders emanating from hearings will include all of the findings required by state and federal law. • The court will fully and appropriately engage

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
cards in hearings.	on the <i>Guidelines</i> and Bench Cards.	outcomes (see quality of hearings assessment below).	children and families present in court. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court orders will address child well-being, trauma and permanency issues as appropriate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and expand the use of juvenile dependency mediation. 	Reviewed findings of juvenile dependency mediations evaluations conducted in other jurisdictions in NV. Examined barriers to expanding use of mediation in Clark County.	Establish a pilot mediation program in Clark County. Train all stakeholders. After a reasonable pilot period, evaluate the results, make changes to the program indicated by the evaluation and then begin the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased litigation of child abuse and neglect matters. • More timely case process and permanency. • Increased understanding of the dependency process by parents, children and families involved. • Increased engagement and voice of parents and families in the dependency process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate a court process to focus on youth aging-out of or aged-out of the system. 	Researched national court-based models that focus specifically on preparing youth for independent living and aging-out of the system. Identified current (local) practice with respect to youth at risk of aging out of the system. Conducted NCJFCJ <i>Resource Guidelines</i> training that included a focus on judges' responsibilities to ensure better permanency outcomes for youth at risk for aging out of the system.	Research continued on existing programs and resources for NV youth and any gaps. Identify "best practice" older youth programs in other jurisdictions and assess adaptability of these programs for NV. Conduct site visit to observe model best practices for youth at risk of aging-out of the system. Presentation on the Speciality Court model (e.g., Benchmark Permanency Hearings) where older youth are dealt with on a separate calendar. Consider Illinois Benchmark Permanency Hearings and adaptability for Clark County. Develop implementation and evaluation plans as needed. Determine whether additional judicial education is necessary to infuse better focus on older youth currently on caseloads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better transition from care to adult pathway. • Better preparation for independent living with emphasis on practical life skill training. • Development of and delivery of appropriate resources for older youth in the system at age appropriate marker before aging out occurs. • Application of evidence-based best practices for older youth. • Better engagement of and opportunity for voice for older youth in the system; achieving permanency prior to aging-out. • Improved well-being outcomes for youth. • Heightened focus on job training, stable housing/ living and continuing education of youth who age out of the system. • Heightened focus on continuing to seek

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	Identified partners to design and implement a mentoring program.	Partner with University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Law School Clinic Services. Identify current chair or director of university based programs to assist and/or create a mentoring model.	<p>permanency; see additional outcomes noted above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better engagement and opportunity for voice of youth in the case process and in their own case plans and permanency planning Better prepared youth for adulthood and independent living.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine what needs to be done to ensure medical consent language is included in protective custody orders. 	Reviewed current actual practice with respect to medical consent language and orders, and whether standard form is necessary vs. implementation of heightened focus on the need for a standard consent form at the time of the hearing (case-by-case assessment). Use of a standard form was determined not to be a recurring issue in practice. Assessed whether a due process issue could arise with respect to the parent (i.e., if a default consent form is signed without a parent present and there is no immediate need for medical care or treatment, further court proceedings could/should be utilized).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By statute, the Department has authority to act in instances of emergencies. When situations arise that are not defined as an “emergency” and therefore not covered by the Department’s ability to make medical decisions, an emergency motion calendar is in place that allows for judicial oversight and action within 24-48 hours in appropriate instances where medical intervention is needed.
3) Require a court hearing where there are no exigent circumstances prior to or concurrently with removal.	Assessed judicial resources necessary to determine if adequate judicial officers (within the one family/one judge model) exist to set/schedule hearing(s).	Hearings need to start. Also need to assess whether the proper legal objective can be met by affidavit process. Need to pull and coordinate statistics on non-removal and return cases. Provide statistics for all units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with federal law.
4) Initiate a statewide committee to develop Rules of Juvenile Dependency Procedure.	Created Rules Committee. Scheduled Bench Bar Meeting to review and discuss the first draft of Family Division Rule. Drafted Administrative Docket to vet new Rules. Secured funding	Meetings are ongoing. Draft rule for subcommittee approval expected Fall 2016.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent process and procedural accountability for all Family Division. Meaningful expectation of compliance with best practices among and between courtrooms for consistent judicial decision-making.

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	for participating Senior Judge.		
5) Implement updated technology in the court capable of providing court orders, case plans and case plan summaries to all parties.	The electronic dissemination of court orders, case plans and case summaries is fully implemented (with the exception of the Preliminary Protective Hearing (PPH)). All parties are now provided with a copy of court orders and case plans in court. Attorneys can assess these documents electronically.	Implement electronic dissemination of court orders, case plans and case plan summaries at the PPH (a template form is currently being used and is available within 24 hours of the PPH). Assessment of improved dissemination of court orders, case plans and case plan summaries is ongoing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parties will have an improved understanding of what is required of them. • Increased compliance with court orders. • Reduced failure to appear. • Improved timeliness of court process.
	Tasks completed to achieve this goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing current technological capacity. • Determining fiscal resource to update and/or reprogram existing technology. • Running test programs in pilot courtroom; and developing plans to assess the value of the improved dissemination of court orders, case plans, and case plan summaries. 	See above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above.
6) Continue to enhance the Community Improvement Council (CIC).	Reviewed CIC mission and agendas for upcoming CIC meetings.	Determine areas where CIC process can benefit/enhance implementation of the reform strategies of the BRK.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased stakeholder and community collaboration in reform efforts. • Increased engagement of the community, including foster parents and service providers in reform efforts.
7) Continued assessment of the quality of court hearings.	Reviewed quality of hearings assessment previously conducted by NCJFCJ.	Using findings from previous study to determine areas of hearing practice in need of improvement. Determine outstanding evaluation and assessment issues (i.e., what more needs to be known about hearing quality, especially given implementation of reform strategies of the BRK).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See outcomes listed under #2 above re: NCJFCJ training on the <i>Resource Guidelines</i>.

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	See above.	Develop an assessment tool for each hearing in the process based on the NCJFCJ <i>Enhanced Resource Guidelines</i> bench cards and need to measure quality of hearing process in light of BRK reforms. Conduct a thorough court observation and hearing quality assessment using the tools. Use this hearing quality assessment as part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the one family/one judge implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above.

BRK Subcommittee #4

Recommendation: Ensure Meaningful Representation and Voice in the Process

Table 5. BRK Subcommittee # 4

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
<p>1) Require early appointment of counsel for legal parents and children.</p>	<p>Reviewed research literature on outcomes associated with enhanced parent and child representation.</p>	<p>Assign Contract Attorneys for PPH for each courtroom. Adjust calendars so parent arrives an hour early to meet with an attorney. Secure meeting space near courtroom.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier representation leads to less protracted litigation, which will lower the time to achieve permanency resulting in better outcomes for our children.
	<p>Reviewed national best practice standards for representation of parents and children.</p>		
	<p>The Appointed Counsel’s Office currently employs 13 attorneys. This number will be increased to replace the 6 Special Public Defenders (SPDs) that have been reassigned and an additional 2 contract attorneys for a total of 21 contract attorneys.</p>	<p>Hire an additional 8 contract attorneys to represent parents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation for every indigent parent at the earliest stages will result in enhanced family engagement, improved communication and less protracted litigation.
	<p>Reviewed “best practice” caseload standards, which indicate a caseload of 80. The current caseload for contract attorneys is 125.</p>	<p>Use a weighted caseload average (i.e., taking into account all of the hearings including pre-adjudicatory, post-adjudicatory and pre-report and disposition, and post-disposition status review checks) to determine the most appropriate caseload for each contract attorney.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manageable caseloads will result in more timely and effective representation of parents resulting in achieving more timely permanency.
	<p>Reviewed current staffing and caseloads of the CAP currently employs 20 attorneys, 2 paralegals and 8 support staff. The average caseload is 61 cases, 119 children (best practice average is 100 clients or 55-60 cases). Hired two new attorneys, with plans put in place to hire more and to increase the pro bono attorney base. CAP attorneys are now present at each</p>	<p>Secure funding for additional attorneys and support staff so that every child in the system has access to an attorney.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation for our children at the earliest stages of the case will ensure that our children’s voices are heard and that their best interests are addressed from the onset of the case. • Safety, timeliness, permanency and well-being outcomes for children will improve over baseline.

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	<p>initial preliminary protective hearing.</p> <p>Added examination of District Attorneys (DA) practice to work of the subcommittee. Reviewed the American Bar Association (ABA) standards for best practice caseload size to determine if current caseload size meets those standards. Made request for additional staff to meet best practice standards.</p>	<p>Obtain additional staff in order to create management caseloads.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency attorneys will carry manageable caseloads consistent with best practices. Manageable caseloads will result in more timely and effective representation of the DFS resulting in improved safety and more timely permanency for our children.
<p>2) Require impact and process evaluation of the Children’s Attorney Project (CAP), Special Public Defenders, (SPD), District Attorneys, and GAL and/or CASA.</p>	<p>Data collected to assess the impact of legal representation on the system.</p> <p>Guide to Child Welfare Law and Immigration Law created.</p> <p>Obtained a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) consult on legal representation, which resulted in the design of a survey to assess stakeholders’ current perceptions of attorney practice.</p> <p>Identified performance expectations and associated performance measures for contract attorneys, CAP</p>	<p>Draft reports on impact of legal representation. Use the findings to establish a baseline of current practice and to determine areas in need of improvement. Use the findings to design trainings and policy. Use the findings to determine additional areas in need of evaluation.</p> <p>Place on ABA Center for Children and the Law and on CIP’s websites. Train all attorneys in the system on the Guide.</p> <p>Administer survey to Court Improvement Council (CIC) members; send reminders; compile results; develop and distribute report of findings; use findings to determine areas in need of improvement.</p> <p>Work collaboratively to further refine performance measures by developing agreed upon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understanding of the impact of legal representation on outcomes for parents, children and the system. Provide an overview of immigration law and federal and state resources for child welfare attorneys handling cases involving immigration issues. Improve legal representation in dependency cases when immigration issues are present. Assess court practitioners’ perceptions of attorney representation as well as mediation to determine current practice baseline. Provide a better understanding of needs with respect to representation and areas requiring training and improvement. Effective legal representation for all parties will result in more

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	attorneys, and Deputy District Attorneys [see performance measures addendum in appendix to this report].	benchmarks for performance (e.g., expectations for the number of cases with attorneys appointed at the PPH, expectations regarding timeliness, expectations for the number of cases achieving specific permanency outcomes, etc.). Use performance measures to design an evaluation that will assess attorney practice. Implement evaluation and use findings to identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. Use evaluation findings to determine extent to which attorneys are achieving performance expectations. Design and implement practice/policy changes and training to address identified areas of need.	timely and better outcomes for our children (safety, timeliness, permanency and well-being).
	Identified court's expectations for representation practice and associated performance measures [see performance measures addendum in appendix to this report].	Work collaboratively to further refine performance measures by developing agreed upon benchmarks for performance (e.g., expectations for the number of cases with attorneys appointed at the PPH, expectations regarding timeliness, expectations for the number of cases achieving specific permanency outcomes, etc.). Use performance measures to design an evaluation that will assess attorney practice. Implement evaluation and use findings to identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. Use evaluation findings to determine extent to which	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective legal representation for all parties will result in more timely and better outcomes for our children (safety, timeliness, permanency and well-being).

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
		attorneys are achieving performance expectations. Design and implement practice/policy changes and training to address identified areas of need.	
3) Require early appointment of a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for all Children.	Made recommendation as to funding needed to secure the number of CASAs needed and support staff to provide adequate coverage.	Determine funding source and plan for incremental headcount. CASA's expansion plans were developed into a two- part phase, with the goal of expanding CASA volunteer base from 350-500. Phase I (Fiscal Year [FY] 16-17) would expand CASA volunteer base from 350 to 400 and Phase II (FY 17-18) would expand CASA volunteer base from 400-500. With Phase I and II expansion plans, the court's goal is to increase the number of children represented by a CASA volunteer from 1,000 to 1,500 over the next 2 years. By following the proposed expansion plans, as well as by continuing to utilize the Peer Coordinator Model, the proposed staffing structure will result in a total funding cost of \$360,000.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier appointment of a GAL and/or CASA for children. • Compliance with NV law requiring appointment of a GAL for all children. • Improved safety, timeliness, permanency and well-being outcomes for children involved in the dependency system.
4) Listen to and include the voice of youth and foster parents in the process.	Identified key barriers to participation of youth in the system.	Adjust court calendar to reflect school schedule. Provide private waiting area for children and caregivers. Train judges on how to address children. Provide transportation for child if needed. CAP to host roundtables to obtain client feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved environment and experience will drive greater participation for children. • Improved communication and feedback will lead to better representation, services and court process. • Compliance with federal law that children participate in their own case planning and are able to participate in the normal activities of childhood. • Greater participation of children in the system will result in improved safety,

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	<p>Discussed ways to give relatives and foster parents a greater voice in the dependency court process.</p>	<p>Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) to require caseworkers inform foster/kinship families of court dates. Require judges to inquire if foster parents are present and if they want to be heard. Add foster/kinship parent to email notification system. Educate foster/kinship parent on court process, checking in with Bailiff, etc. Host roundtables for feedback with stakeholders (foster/kinship parent, CAP, CASA, court).</p>	<p>timeliness, permanency and well-being outcomes for children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved communication will lead to better outcomes for our children (safety, permanency and well-being). Improved communication and opportunity for voice in the process should result in better educated caregivers and should improve retention.

BRK Subcommittee #5
Recommendation: Selection, Retention, Training and Ongoing Professional Development
Table 6. BRK Subcommittee #5

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
1) Examine current training for all child welfare partners and enhance to align with best practices	Reviewed current training provided to all child welfare partners (judiciary, district attorneys, children’s attorneys (CAP), CASA/GAL, special public defenders (SPD), child welfare case workers, behavioral health, and foster parents), including any opportunities for multidisciplinary training and information on best practice components).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for all child welfare partners that addresses identified gaps in current training models and aligns with best practices. • Training that provides multiple opportunities for multi-disciplinary learning. • Training that includes an e-learning component to facilitate access and continued education. • An enhanced ability to track, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training programs. • As a result of participating in training, all child welfare partners will have better knowledge of their specific roles and responsibilities (and roles and responsibilities of others), and improved skill sets and competencies that they apply to improve client and/or case process and outcomes.
	Using information from comprehensive review of current training, mapped out clear training gaps as well as opportunities for better efficiencies and partnerships.		
	After review of current training capacities and gaps, developed a proposal for additional training staff and a learning management system that would allow for expansion of e-learning and ability to track, monitor and evaluate training.	Obtain funding for proposal implementation.	
2) Recruit, train and support quality foster parents and streamline the process whenever possible.	Reviewed current foster parent training, recruitment, support and the Quality Parenting Initiative. Added a foster parent to subcommittee team.	Recommend that (1) DFS consider replacing TIPS-MAPP (Trauma Informed Partnering for Safety and Permanence Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting) with a new training program for foster parents; and (2) that any foster parent training program include a segment on Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) youth and anti-bullying.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An improved training experience for prospective foster parents (as measured by increased satisfaction with training and foster parent role, increased knowledge and competencies, and demonstrated application of those competencies in their role as foster parents). • Shortened time to complete the training program while at the same time improving

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
			the training quality outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased retention and recruitment of quality foster parents.
3) Implement multidisciplinary training for all system stakeholders.	Reviewed reports on current stakeholder training (see strategy #1 above) to identify opportunities for shared training. Obtained leadership training curricula examples for all stakeholders in the child welfare system and identified opportunities for leadership training for all stakeholders.	With BRK #2 and #3, develop a Judicial Safety Decision-Making SIPS Implementation Plan that includes a SIPS model training component for all judicial partners (court, DFS, DA, SPD, CAP, CASA, SPD and conflict attorneys) outlining how the SIPS safety model impacts decisions made at every juncture of the dependency hearing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multidisciplinary cross-training in the statewide SIPS model will ensure that each of the child welfare system partners (court, DFS, DA, SPD, CAP, CASA, Conflict Attorneys are speaking the same language when it comes to making critical safety decisions about the child.
		ACTION (by and through DFS) will provide the SIPS overview, training modules, and facilitate debrief (by June 30, 2016). The judiciary will lead the judicial teams to ensure that the safety model is implemented with fidelity in the courtroom. Completion of SIPS Judicial Implementation Plan by December 31, 2016.	Key outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased understanding and application of commonly used terms associated with child safety intervention (i.e., present danger, impending danger, etc.); Increased interdisciplinary respect through judicial team decision-making and collaboration Increased understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the interacting disciplines; and Improved communication based upon a shared conceptual framework and lexicon.
4) Require agency management to implement and enforce professionalism standards of practice.	Examined strategies for the implementation of professionalism standards	Review results of the examination of professionalism standards of practice; develop an action plan stemming from that analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen professionalism standards if needed on basis of the review; and improve training on professionalism standards if needed on basis of the review.
5) Improve and require ongoing judicial training.	Reviewed current training provided to judicial officers (including opportunities for multidisciplinary training and information on best	See Judicial Safety Decision-Making SIPS Implementation Plan described in strategy #3 above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved understanding of role and responsibilities of dependency court judges, including improved

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	<p>practice components -see strategy #1 above).</p> <p>Used information obtained about current training to map out clear gaps as well as opportunities for better efficiencies and partnerships (see strategy #1 above).</p>		<p>understanding of judicial safety and reasonable efforts decision-making and best practice components of handling child abuse and neglect cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency in application of the law and procedure. • Maintain due process rights of parties. • Improved safety, timeliness, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families involved in the dependency court system.
<p>6). Continue to implement and enhance the Child Welfare Academy.</p>	<p>Reviewed curriculum of Child Welfare Academy and best practices for retaining case workers through Academy of Excellence. Reviewed Nevada Partnership for Training proposed implementation strategies.</p>	<p>Recommend curriculum be updated to include: SIPS training; a training segment focus on the LGBT community; and anti-bullying. Recommend that UNLV/Nevada partners create training schedule allowing no less than 120 and preferably 150 employees trained per year. Recommend DFS consider using a realistic video that depicts the day-to-day duties and stresses of the job, and shows it to prospective applicants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved training outcomes (increased satisfaction, increased level of skills and competencies, application of learning in the field), and reduced caseload by putting more caseworkers in the field. • Increased retention of skilled caseworkers. • Improved safety, permanency, timeliness and well-being outcomes for children and families involved in the dependency system.
	<p>Determined status of request to Casey Family Programs to analyze current training for child welfare caseworkers.</p>	<p>Build statewide child welfare training competencies that will outline required trainings for new hires, ongoing staff, and supervision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above.
	<p>Explored ways to support/fund enhancements to the Academy such as more staff to conduct trainings, develop eLearning capabilities, provide expanded supervisor training, and offer training to additional stakeholder groups.</p>	<p>Recommend that DFS, in collaboration with UNLV, establish online courses that cover all of the foundational competencies and include that part of an employee's required training. Online courses should be available to employees for refresher training, and be made available to judicial partners as appropriate.</p>	

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
		Integrate the Protective Capacity Family Assessment and Protective Capacity Progress Assessment into the New Worker Academy.	
		Develop ability to offer some modules of the training at an advanced level.	
		Develop training staff to be coaches and to implement a coaching environment in the field and with families (practice implementation coaching).	

BRK Subcommittee #6

Recommendation: Improve Public Education about the System

Table 7. BRK Subcommittee #6

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
1) Define public understanding and perception of the child abuse and neglect system.	Developed Comprehensive Case Lifespan Flow Chart that shows the entire process, from referral to various outcomes. Goal is to have clickable links allow user to get more information and resource lists.	A Comprehensive Service Array Needs Assessment is required to identify resources and supports available for families. This service array will be incorporated into the Flow Chart to expand the Green Community Partner Buttons out into information available and resource lists to the general public. [This recommendation overlaps with BRK #1, 2, 6 & 7].	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the Comprehensive Case Life Span Flow Chart describes the entire process and how various child welfare system partners (DFS, court, schools, community partners, etc.) touch the life of a case from start to finish, it cannot provide an accurate service array until a Comprehensive Service Array Needs Assessment is conducted. This assessment will identify what resources, services and supports are available for the community. Once this information is obtained, the Green Community Partner Buttons on the Flow Chart will crosslink to the respective community resources so that the public will have this information at their fingertips. Intended outcomes are not only increased public access to resources but also improved public awareness, understanding, and perceptions of the child abuse and neglect system.
		Include the flow chart on appropriate BRK, county, court, CCSD web pages to assist the community in understanding the child welfare system and community resources.	
2) Post and showcase child protection/child abuse and neglect system improvements and success stories.	Developed Comprehensive Case Lifespan Flow Chart that shows the entire process, from referral to various outcomes. Goal is to have clickable links allow user	Include the Flow Chart on appropriate BRK, county, court, CCSD web pages to assist the community in understanding the child welfare system and community resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See strategy #1 above.

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	<p>to get more information and resource lists.</p> <p>Developed a successful faith outreach and adoption recruitment campaign through the partnership between Mayor’s Faith Initiative and DFS. Over 100 faith communities worked closely with DFS to cultivate the message and promote the Wait No More: Finding Families for Nevada’s Waiting Children Event. As a result, approximately 400 people from over 100 churches united to raise awareness and recruit for adoptive families. Over 100 people stepped forward to begin the adoption process, with 84 people fingerprinted and another 25 to return.</p>	<p>While the success of this Event lies not just in the numbers and outcomes; but also in the strategic partnerships formed in preparation for the Event. This Event marks the beginning of an interfaith momentum grounded in strategic alliance. In further collaboration between the Mayor’s Faith Initiative and DFS, a robust Interfaith Strategic Plan should be developed that identifies various opportunities the faith community can plug in to serve children and families in care. The development of the plan will require a commitment of time, leadership and resources, as well as endorsement of the BRK Commission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have identified a continuum of care for faith communities that begins with prevention (i.e., Safe Families for Children Program); includes foster and adoption; includes caregiver support ministries; includes normalcy and life enrichment opportunities; and opportunities for mentorship for youth aging out of care, among others. • To expand and enhance the involvement of the faith community as a partner in improving child welfare outcomes. • To break down the silos and strategically align all sectors (public, private and non-profit) for collective impact for improved safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families.
	<p>Developed collaboration with CCSD and DFS to ensure Foster Care Advocates are assigned to every school so that students in foster care, (their caseworkers, foster parents and team), have a designated school based foster care liaison. Also ensured that CCSD will develop Academic Plans for all students (elementary, middle and high school).</p>	<p>Recommend that there is compliance with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to ensure school stability at school of origin and school success for every student in foster care as required by law. [School Stability and Success Recommendation Overlap between BRK #6 and #7]. Ensure that there is a specific, written expectation that foster students can stay in original schools, with transportation provided, and that any decision otherwise can be appealed. Publicize this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased school stability for school of origin (unless contrary to best interest) and improved school success (through support systems, academic plans, adequate progress towards graduation, college/career readiness, etc.) for every student in foster care at every grade level. • Ultimate outcome will be educational success for children in both CCSD and DFS systems, including school stability (i.e., transportation to their school of origin) and

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
		<p>policy on recruitment materials.</p> <p>Develop and implement an ESSA Strategic Plan (Memorandum of Agreement [MOU]) focused on school stability and school success for every student in foster care (by 2016-2017 Academic Year).</p> <p>UNITY should be replaced with a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) capable of data exchange and communication with child welfare system partners (e.g., school district, court, juvenile justice, foster parents, etc.). [UNITY Recommendation Overlap with BRK #2, 3, 6 and 7].</p>	<p>school success (i.e., academic plans, tutors, resources and supports) for every student.</p>
<p>3) Improve Transparency and Consistency in Public Reporting.</p>	<p>The new Case Lifespan Flow Chart provides detailed, understandable, comprehensive information about the foster care system. It will be published on DFS, CCSD and court websites as well as those of other affiliated provider organizations.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public will have improved awareness of child welfare system goals, process, and outcomes as well as resources available to children and families and how to access those resources.
<p>4) Analyze and enhance the office of the Ombudsman and Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) Public Information Officer.</p>	<p>Reviewed the Ombudsman mission, role and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Recommend “branding” the Ombudsman name to infer its open, helping nature for 24/7 service and support. Promote the Office of the Ombudsman so that the public utilizes the invaluable service that this office provides.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More traffic will be driven to the Ombudsman Office so this invaluable resource will be utilized. Any concerns by the public will be handled in the most effective and expeditious manner through the respective office designated by the County.
<p>5) Initiate an effective marketing campaign to recruit and retain more foster parents.</p>	<p>Developed Strategic Messaging and Action Plans for (1) Prevention and (2) Recruitment of Foster Parents/CASA that identified the messaging and steps needed to accomplish the goals.</p>	<p>Follow through on the Strategic Messaging Plans. The Prevention Plan interplays with the Interfaith Strategic Plan (see focus area #2 above) in that both plans include collaboration with the interfaith community,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention: Families in crisis need to know where they can turn for help as an alternative to situations spiralling out of control. The Strategic Messaging Prevention Plan (used with the Interfaith Strategic Plan) will

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress So Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	Presented these plans to the full BRK Commission.	among others. The Recruitment Plan relies on DFS' R&R Advertising material (i.e., video, public service announcement ([PSA], ads, collateral material, etc.).	provide families in crisis with the infrastructure of support they need to prevent having to enter foster care.
	Developed Targeted Foster Parent Recruitment material (advertisements, PSAs, collateral material, etc.) through DFS partnership with R&R Advertising.	Use the newly created R&R ad and run at: Department of Motor Vehicles' Offices, public meetings (e.g., at Mayor's Faith Initiative gatherings, non-profit galas); jury waiting rooms; UNLV and College of Southern Nevada classes and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment: Support of the entire community is needed to successfully change the entire child welfare system. The Strategic Messaging Recruitment Plan (when used with DFS' R&R targeted recruitment material) will result in innovative foster parent recruitment and retention efforts that are not isolated to just DFS doing the recruitment, but instead includes the BRK partners coming together to deliver a cohesive message to the community – "that OUR children need YOU to step up for them! Be a Foster Parent. Be a CASA. Be a Mentor. Be SOMEBODY in this child's life!" Ultimately, result will be more foster parents, more CASA, and more mentors for children of all ages and needs in the dependency system.
	Engage Purdue Marion & Associates and R&R to develop a promotional campaign for 211 Service and the DFS Foster Parent Champion Programs in order to emphasize prevention services.	Consider adding a "Foster Parent of the Year" award to at least one child agency gala, and show the video there as well. Explore consolidating smaller scale gala events into one large gala, ensuring that each agency gets the money it raises. The goal is to reach a greater, wider audience.	
	Draw upon the release of the new movie, "Three Little Words" to promote foster care by holding a premiere or special screening in Las Vegas.		

BRK Subcommittee #7

Recommendation: Collaboration for Systemic Overarching Reform

Table 8. BRK Subcommittee #7

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress so Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
<p>1) Examine the use of congregate care in foster care as well as the placement system for children in foster care to ensure that all children are in the best family setting with the fewest disruptions possible.</p>	<p>Data have been analyzed showing that a large number of children in Child Haven should not be in congregate care. Identified an outdated placement system as a major impediment to efficient placement of children. Openings were almost impossible to identify except by calling; foster parents and workers were frustrated.</p>	<p>The UNITY data system for matching children to available beds is not functional. Recommend replacing UNITY with a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) capable of data exchange and communication with child welfare system partners (e.g., court, juvenile justice, school district, foster parents, etc.). [Recommendation Overlap with BRK #2, 3, 6 and 7].</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved overall system of placement that functions. • Improved exchange of information and communication with child welfare partners to overcome placement matching barriers. • Improved caregiver placement matching and placement outcomes (reduced need for congregate care, more placement opportunities, children placed timely and in most appropriate setting for their needs).
	<p>DFS undertook a rapid response initiative whereby workers contacted hundreds of foster parents to update their data. Updated basic demographic information by hand. Designed a new placement application as an interim fix.</p>	<p>Pilot and then implement the new placement application. Evaluate the use of the application.</p>	
	<p>Reviewed current barriers to placing children with relatives. Finalized issues involving criminal background checks/substantiation issues (see discussion below). DFS established new policies to clarify the licensing of relatives so that relatives will no longer be ignored as placement option because of a remote criminal background issue that has nothing to do with the child's best interests.</p>	<p>Currently, there are 850 unlicensed relative families due to inconsistent statewide policies (this issue is being addressed by a separate BRK subcommittee). See strategy #4 below.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More placement opportunities for children in foster care. Increased used of relative placements. • Improved permanency and child well-being outcomes.
	<p>Examined need for foster families for special populations.</p>	<p>Work with Division of Aging and Disability Services to create targeted placement programs for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved placement options for foster children with significant disabilities in Child Haven.

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress so Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
		children with disabilities. Targeted recruitment needed to assist with placement of larger sibling groups (obtain Faith Outreach, R&R recruitment assistance).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional placement opportunities for sibling groups in foster care.
	Added an opportunity for youth voice in placement decisions to the new placement application. In DFS's new application, there is an opportunity to have a child record information they would like foster parents to hear about them.	Roll out this segment of the placement application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment of youth voice and better placement opportunities.
	Examined the census at the Child Haven campus.	DFS will work with Casey Family Programs on using permanency roundtables for children on Child Haven Campus and those who are in care 18 months or younger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of placement being considered as a silo, all team members will be able to talk about the child strengths and brainstorm options.
	Examined the need for assessment homes.	DFS will continue to ascertain whether short-term emergency foster homes can be used to keep siblings together or to reduce the census of Child Haven. This guarantees an additional move, but may be extremely helpful so that a tailored placement is found.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This idea will proceed if found to be feasible.
	Examined disruption rates.	Analyze causes for disruption rules (1,149 disrupted in FY 15; 96 per month).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More stable placements, more appropriate placements to needs of children; better safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children.
	Examined use of Child Haven by juvenile justice system.	Children are being "sentenced" by the juvenile delinquency court and sent to Child Haven. Populations are mixing with potentially dangerous results. Collaborative discussions are needed between the DA, Department of Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS), DFS and the courts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More appropriate use of Child Haven.

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress so Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
2) Fully implement normal childhood standards for children in foster care.	Adopted and begun implementation of normal childhood standards for children in foster care. Normalcy policy has been finalized and posted.	Local policies need to be issued and distributed. Training needs to occur regarding the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in foster care will be treated more like children (e.g., more access to normal activities of childhood as appropriate).
	Determined that a grievance policy needs to be established so that individuals who are not allowed to treat children in a normal fashion will have an opportunity for redress.	Work to establish a grievance policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redress can occur when a dispute happens.
	Determined that there should be a source of funds to ensure that the children in foster care can afford activities available to other children their age.	Discuss this opportunity with HELP of Southern Nevada to see if they would be interested. If so, develop a fundraising plan to assist children with this type of help.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A source of funding will be available so that children are not deprived of a childhood. Children in foster care will be treated more like children (e.g., more access to normal activities of childhood as appropriate).
3) Fully and consistently implement the practices permitted by the Title IV-E waiver.	3 geographic zones have implemented the program.	Implementation department wide. As of March 2016, DFS is serving 61 families that total 126 children safely in the home. Long-term goal is to serve 480 families by June 2017. Training of IV-E safety service providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of IV-E money to provide safety services in the home will reduce the need for child removal and placement into foster care.
	Reviewed, discussed and made recommendations of services needed by families in our community.	Inventory and assess what services are currently available in the community and what services are needed. A statewide or county-wide Comprehensive Child Welfare System Service Array Needs Assessment needs to be developed. [Recommendation overlap BRK #1, 2, 6, and 7].	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understanding of gaps in service arrays which need funding in order to help children in foster care.
4) Implement Subsidized Guardianship.	Workgroup finalized the eligibility criteria, subsidy issuance, and other related policies of subsidized guardianship. UNITY has been reconfigured, internal process checklist has been evaluated and approved, and successor guardianship	Evaluate program launch. Evaluate the program's expansion to fictive kin in November 2016.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A consistent approach to licensing relatives with issues in their background so that relatives may be able to obtain subsidized guardianship. Increase in guardianship placements.

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress so Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	<p>issues resolved. Federal approval has been granted. Program launched May 2016. Training provided in Clark County for judges, attorneys, and DFS (others statewide conferenced into training).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in need for placement moves. • Improved permanency outcomes for children in foster care.
	<p>Determined need for study of subsidized guardianships on unlicensed relative placements. Since program is limited to licensed relatives, evaluated the process whereby relatives are not currently licensed. Established new policies clarifying the licensing process so that relatives are not overlooked due to remote criminal background issues having nothing to do with child's best interests.</p>	<p>Statewide roll-out of policy on non-safety related waivers for placement and licensing of relatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear policy will be in place that is consistent statewide. The policy will outline what a non-safety issue is and what consideration may be made by the state administrator when approving a waiver.
	<p>Created a workgroup to review state and federal law, local and state policy and procedures regarding unpaid relative placements and the legal rights of these families and children to become licensed foster care providers and have financial support for the families.</p>	<p>Introduce legislation to clarify licensing and waivers for relatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference in the law around placement and safety-related issues clarified.
	<p>Determined the need to do more to ensure that pamphlets/information for relatives are disseminated to them so they understand how to help their relative children in foster care. Family Law Self-Help Center created website.</p>	<p>Provide relatives with a guide on how to request licensure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More relatives taking their family members out of foster care.
	<p>Explored opportunities to support relative caregivers through: Foster Kinship collaboration; In-home trauma debrief services; and SAFE@Home confirming safe environments.</p>	<p>Recommend that DFS supports a legislative allocation of funds to support increased financial support and services to maintain relative placements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More relatives taking their family members out of foster care.

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress so Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
		Need to further define the fictive kin issue and obtain data on the number of children who are currently in fictive kin placements. Analyze in 6 months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly extend subsidized guardianship to fictive kin.
5) Enhance the Implementation of AB350.	Consolidated the operations of AB350 and Step Up programs.	A new MOU between the DFS and Department of Social Services (Clark County Social Services [CCSS]).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a more streamlined delivery of services to former foster youth that can be easily accessed by the youth. • Increased efficiencies by leveraging the respective services of the two programs under one umbrella. • Optimal utilization of both FAFY appropriate Chafee and funding in support of the AB350 population and former foster youth in general. • A more equitable distribution of caseloads by combining staff. • A single focal point for services will afford greater opportunities to attract community collaboration.
	Created a one-stop office/drop in center that is centrally located that is comforting, inviting and youth-oriented.	Waiting for consolidation to be completed to be fully functional.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth are more likely to access services in a comfortable, non-institutional environment. • The setting will be more conducive to rapport-building. • Drop-in Center can be used for youth to access computers for employment and educational services. • Youth will have access to snacks, toiletries and other essential items when there is an immediate need. • Youth can benefit from on-site case management, advocacy guidance and educational classes provided by community partners.

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress so Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	<p>The Step-Up Program has started using the Community Management Information System (CMIS) for program reporting, data and outcome collection, and program planning for the non-AB350 population.</p>	<p>The Step-Up Program will also begin using the CMIS for program reporting, data and outcome collection, and program planning for the AB350 population. Step-Up is currently collecting appropriate consent forms for the AB350 youth for CMIS data entry. Once the consolidation is complete, all of the AB350 client information should be in CMIS (by Sep/Oct 2016).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program reports demonstrating essential client information and tracking individual progress as well as congregate data will be available on demand. • Ability to demonstrate program effectiveness, as well as show any program weaknesses. • Ability to replicate interventions that are effective and make data-driven decisions that will drive change at the policy, program, and practice levels. • Will allow for ongoing evaluation and process improvement.
	<p>Determined need to employ higher level of professionals for case management services. In addition to the social worker and eligibility specialist already working in the Step Up Program, the state approved the DFS request to use the traditionally unspent portions of the Chafee and FAFY budgets to fund an additional 2 social workers and 2 eligibility specialists.</p>	<p>Recruitment efforts are currently underway. Tailored the job announcement to meet the specifications and needs of the program. Accomplish interviews, selection, job offers and background checks. Undertake new employee training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better educated, experienced and skilled professionals to provide assistance in addressing the unique and often complex needs of this population. • Expected and improved outcomes include, but are not limited to: increased graduation rates/GED obtainment; increased access to skills training; increased job readiness, job skills and job obtainment; improved health and wellness; and stabilized housing.
	<p>Determined need for individualized, youth-driven, strengths-based case management based upon specific needs of each youth. A structured decision-making process, including an Acuity Scale and other proven assessment tools should be used to identify youth with highest level of needs to ensure they are provided appropriate levels of intensive social work case management in helping</p>	<p>This structured case management process is currently being used with the non-AB350 population being served by Step Up. Once the consolidation is complete, this same approach will be replicated with the AB350 youth.</p>	

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress so Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	them to achieve their goals and attain positive outcomes.		
		Increased collaboration and coordination with other stakeholders to create and provide Independent Living (IL) classes tailored specifically for former foster youth. Create a working subcommittee of the IL Committee to focus specifically on this activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency approach will reduce duplication of effort. • IL classes specifically aimed at young adults aged 18-20 will be more meaningful and impactful. • Ongoing review of curriculum and evaluation of performance will ensure program success.
	Meeting between DFS, CCSS, Step UP staff, CASA and other providers held to develop a mentorship program aimed at the youth transitioning out of care in collaboration with other community providers.	Develop and implement a mentorship program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentors will provide youth with guidance, support and direction that they need as they transition to adulthood.
		Increase the parity and equity between the FAFFY benefits available to the current non AB350 Step Up program and those provided to the AB350 population. This will require a budgetary review and analysis to ensure funding continuity with FAFFY funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain benefits funded with FAFFY such as monthly bus passes would be made available to AB350 youth who have difficulty accessing affordable transportation. • Having the ability to independently get to appointments, school, work, etc., is vital for AB350 program participants to succeed in meeting program requirements and, more importantly, in achieving their individual goals and producing better outcomes.
		Develop an oversight committee made up of various stakeholders, including former foster youth to review the program on an ongoing basis for effectiveness and outcomes, and making recommendations for enhancements to the program as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure quality improvements efforts are ongoing. Make recommendations for best practices.

Implementation Strategy/Objective	Progress so Far	What More is Needed	Outcomes Expected
	<p>Pursued funding for expansion of services for supplemental purposes. The CCSS Resource Center identified a grant opportunity through the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) to promote the effective transition from homeless youth to self-sufficient young adult, with former foster youth being one of the target populations. CCSS convened a meeting with community providers (Westcare, NV Partnership for Homeless Youth, the LGBT Center, Safety, Olive Crest) for discussion as a first step moving forward.</p>	<p>Pursuit of new grant and funding opportunities will be ongoing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursuing additional grant dollars from other funders allows the program to provide for a broader array of services. • Additional funding will enhance and support the program, filling gaps that may exist. • Diversified funding streams also provide an opportunity to innovate new solutions.
<p>6) Examine and improve educational outcomes for children in foster care by evaluating three pillars: 1) Is the child in the right school? 2) Is the child making adequate progress towards graduation? 3) Does the child leave high school college and career ready?</p>	<p>Made request for data showing the existing educational outcomes for children in foster care. Determined need to analyze children in 8-12 grade levels to create a benchmark of data and to establish data points and baseline of academic outcomes using the data.</p>	<p>It has been difficult to make progress due to significant turnover at CCSD. The district is attempting to gather this information. The CCSD is sponsoring a data request to release this data to us.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A benchmark of information constructed to evaluate where children in foster care are now. • Use this information to inform an appropriate set of interventions to help improve academic outcomes.
	<p>Began review of best practices to ensure children have high quality, successful educational opportunities and outcomes.</p>	<p>Recommendations will be forthcoming as soon as data are analyzed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuance of recommendations to improve educational outcomes for children.
	<p>Ensured school data are modified on Infinite Campus System so foster care workers can obtain access to it.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved capability to monitor foster children's progress in school, troubleshoot any concerns, and track educational outcomes.
	<p>Determined need for CCSD and DFS to properly share information pursuant to federal law. A new law, recently amended, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires policies in MOUs to be established.</p>	<p>Finalize MOU. Implement an ESSA Strategic Plan focused on school stability and school success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoother working relationship between CCSD and DFS on academic progress for children in foster care. • Improved educational outcomes for children in foster care.

CONCLUSION

The BRK Commission members are active agents in fundamental and comprehensive reform. Their commitment to this work continues. The child welfare partners that comprise the Commission and its subcommittee working groups continue to advance system improvements guided by the recommendation framework put forth in the *Moving Forward Together for Clark County's Children Report*. The Commission has thoroughly reviewed Child welfare system practices and policies and made progress restructuring those practices and policies and developing new and innovative approaches and services to improve the system's capacity to better serve Clark County's most vulnerable children and families.

Significant progress has been made to improve accountability and transparency, with system partners agreeing on performance indicators and leadership and responsibility for action agreements. Through the ongoing collaboration of the Commission's subcommittee working groups, the foundation has been laid for continued critical reflection on system performance, continued sharing of information, and for continued innovation in practice and policy. The Commission's recommendations for reform have brought each sector of the child welfare community, including representatives of the consumers of the system (e.g., former foster youth and foster parents), the faith community, and city, county and state governments together to evolve new approaches to serve children and families.

The reforms that have already been implemented as a result of the Commission members' efforts (or are in the process of implementation) will have significant, positive impacts on the child abuse and neglect system in Clark County. Some of the expected results associated with the reform efforts outlined in this report, for example, are:³

Improved Safety

- Reduction in cases of maltreatment while the child is in foster care (i.e., reduction in the number of cases that have a substantiated incident of abuse or neglect while the case is still open with the court).
- Reduction in recurrence of child maltreatment after case closure (i.e., reduction in the number of cases that come back into the system after case closure due to a new petition for abuse or neglect).
- Reduction in the need for child removal and placement into foster care.
- Increase in available in-home services to children and families.
- Increased retention and recruitment of quality foster parents.

Improved Permanency

- Fewer youth who age-out of foster care without a permanent family.
- More relatives taking their family members out of care (e.g., increased use of relative placements for children and increased guardianship permanency outcomes).
- Improvement in placement stability (i.e., fewer placement changes while children are in care).
- Reduction in need for congregate care.

³ This listing is not exhaustive of all of the outcomes identified by the Commission members. For more outcomes, and for the specific strategies tied to these outcomes, see the BRK subcommittee action plans included in this report (i.e., column entitled "Outcomes Expected").

- Permanency outcomes that meet or exceed the national child welfare standards (i.e., national child welfare standards for the percentage of cases achieving reunification or adoption).⁴

Improved Timeliness

- Compliance with all state- and federally-mandated timeframes for the processing of child abuse and neglect cases, with a reduction in the time it takes to achieve hearing events and, ultimately, a reduction in the time it takes to achieve permanency for children and families involved in the system.
- Decreased litigation of child abuse and neglect matters, which can result in significant delay.
- Reduction in failures to appear at court hearings.
- Improvements in the timeliness of achieving permanency (e.g., increase in the number of children exiting to permanency within 24 months, increase in the number of children reunified with 12 months, and increase in the number of children adopted within 24 months).⁵

Improved Child and Family Well-Being

- Better access to a more comprehensive service array that effectively targets and meets the needs of children and families.
- More detailed and comprehensive case plans that are tailored to the specific needs of children and families.
- Compliance with federal law that children participate in their own case planning and are able to participate in the normal activities of childhood.
- More placement opportunities for sibling groups to be placed together.
- More appropriate placements to the needs of children.
- Improved system response to child trauma, education, health and mental health needs, resulting in improved educational, health and mental health outcomes for children and youth.
- Better transition from care to adulthood for older foster care youth (e.g., improved employment, education, housing, health and permanency outcomes).
- More CASA and mentors for children and youth.

Improved Quality of the Court's and Systems' Response to Vulnerable Children and Families

- Improved quality of judicial decision-making in cases (e.g., improved safety and reasonable efforts decision-making; thorough hearings that provide due process of law and address all required issues; better understanding of the needs of children and families that appear before the court; detailed court orders that address safety, trauma and well-being concerns; consistency in among judges and judicial officers; and application of uniform rules of practice and procedures and national standards for best practice).
- Earlier appointment of counsel for all parties, resulting in enhanced engagement of children and families, less protracted litigation, and reduction in time to achieve permanency.

⁴ Federal guidelines establish safety benchmarks and require states to complete efforts for family reunification or adoption with certain timeframes (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Child Welfare Outcomes Report to Congress, 2013).

⁵ Ibid.

- Improved skill levels, competencies and effectiveness of all counsel, including CASA/GALs (e.g., better understanding of roles and responsibilities and adherence to best practice standards for representation in child welfare cases).
- Improved skill levels, competencies and effectiveness of all social service agency staff (e.g., through appropriate alignment of child protective services investigator ratios and caseloads of permanency workers, enhanced training and adherence to expectations for best practice in casework).
- Increased engagement and opportunity for voice of parents, children and families in the child abuse and neglect case process.
- Increased court, agency and community collaboration in reform efforts, including increased involvement of foster parents, youth advocates, and the faith community.
- Increased public access to information about the child welfare system and associated resources.
- Improved public awareness, understanding, and perceptions of the child abuse and neglect system.

Much has been achieved to date, with major milestones reached in all areas of the Commission's focus and with many of the recommendations of the original report already implemented. There is also significant momentum to move forward and work will continue to implement the remaining recommendations. A process for study and review of the progress and effectiveness of the implementation is being put in place to continuously monitor the system to determine if the implemented reforms are working and are making the difference that was contemplated by the reform. The Commission will continue to work with its subcommittee members to innovate and make changes to improve outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system.

APPENDIX A. REPRESENTATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES ADDENDUM TO BRK SUBCOMMITTEE #4 PROGRESS

The subcommittee’s full action plan includes information about assigned responsible party for each task as well as timelines for task achievement. For the purposes of this report and ease of presentation, this information has been omitted.

Role	Performance Measure	Objective	Tasks	Comments
Court	Prompt hearings and timely decisions that adhere to state and federal timelines for practice.	To ensure child welfare cases are heard promptly with a view towards timely decision making and thorough review of issues.	Properly schedule hearings and make quick decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allotted court time should be long enough for the judge to review the case and conduct a meaningful hearing. Judges should avoid delays in decision making.
	Hearings that are thorough and substantive (e.g., make all findings that are required by state and federal law; all parties are represented by counsel; due process is provided to all parties; and every issue facing the family is addressed).	To ensure child welfare cases have a thorough review of issues while upholding the due process rights of parties.	Properly schedule hearings to allow sufficient time for thorough hearings. Use the bench cards from the NCJFCJ <i>Enhanced Resource Guidelines</i> . Further train judges on reasonable efforts decision-making and best practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families are not well-served when hearings are rushed through and they do not have an adequate opportunity to be heard. Permanency is delayed when required findings are not made.
	Appointed attorneys are qualified, well trained, and held accountable.	To ensure all appointed attorneys in abuse and neglect cases comply with the standards of the court.	Safety Intervention and Permanency System (SIPS) training and other relevant training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Court should encourage attorneys to participate in educational opportunities. Court should not appoint attorneys who have failed to meet the minimum training requirements set forth by the court.
	All parties are well represented by counsel (e.g., counsel follows best practice standards).	To ensure appointments are made to parties requiring representation.	Appoint counsel and all necessary resources to parties that require representation at earliest stage of cases. Require attorneys to be familiar with the <i>Enhanced Resource</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are disadvantaged in abuse and neglect cases when not represented by a competent attorney. Better chance for reunification if all parties are represented by counsel.

Role	Performance Measure	Objective	Tasks	Comments
			<i>Guidelines</i> and appropriate standards of attorney practice. Train all attorneys on best practices.	
	Proper caseload for appointed attorneys.	To facilitate early appointment and adherence to best practice standards, ensure proper caseloads for appointed attorneys.	Appointed attorneys caseload should not exceed 80 cases to comply with ABA "Best Practices" standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attorneys' quality of work can diminish when overloaded with cases. Allows attorneys to ensure that their current clients are well represented. Promotes early appointment.
	Provide All Parties With All Relevant Case Documentation	To ensure all parties are well informed of all stages of the case.	Provide all relevant documentation at least 72 hours in advance of hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients having all the information will make better informed decisions and will speed up case process.
District Attorney (DA)	Percentage of Cases Where Children Are Not Reunified within 12 Months Where TPR Petition Has Been Filed by the Permanency Hearing.	Determine which cases that have not reunified in 12mos that are involved in concurrent planning with TPRs.	Case management system must measure time of removal to time TPR petition is filed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DA's office is responsible for filing TPR petitions. Parents can be provided additional time at the 12mo hearing via compelling reasons. Continuation of reunification may not be a successful impact to child's time to permanency. 432B and 128 cases are separate filings in Odyssey, which creates a problem in the current system.
	Filing Motions To Waive The Requirement Of Reasonable Efforts To Reunify	Ensure DA's office is complying with Federal/State law stating there are circumstances where reasonable efforts to reunify are not required.	Case management system must ID when statutory grounds exist to file a motion and if/when the motion was filed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to permanency is essential to our children. Fed/State law requires that focus is obtaining alternative permanent placement for a child when reasonable efforts are not required.
	DA Meet With Permanency Workers Monthly	Ensure that all cases with regular review hearings within 30 days are staffed.	Add "DA Contact" tab to case management system (Unity) to determine if case was staffed 30 days prior to next scheduled review hearing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DAs can assist in identifying issues and guiding through barriers to permanency.

Role	Performance Measure	Objective	Tasks	Comments
	Engage In Settlement Negotiations And Mediation When Appropriate	To speed up permanency for the children and avoid litigation if possible.	Review of sample cases and client surveys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlements can speed up permanency for our children. • Settlements can lead to faster treatment for parents. • Settlements avoid litigation.
	Adhere To All Relevant Training	Be properly trained in court specific classes.	Safety Intervention and Permanency System (SIPS) training, Enhanced Resource Guidelines, and other relevant training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be properly trained in court specific classes.
Children's Attorney Project (CAP)	Amount of Client Contact	Ensure sufficient communication between clients and attorneys.	In person, telephonic, or written contact w/ non-AB350 clients at least once a quarter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly communication is consistent with ABA best practices.
	Frequency of Child and Family Treatment (CFT) Team Meetings Attendance	To provide sufficient client representation at CFT Team meetings.	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our children are represented at all stages of case.
	Initial Appearances	To consistently appear at initial Preliminary Protective Hearings (PPH).	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include how often appearances result in secondary or follow-up review.
	Training Requirements	Sufficiently train CAP attorneys.	CAP specific courses and training classes TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess quality of training programs and classes. • How consistently to CAP attorneys attend high quality training classes on topics likely to lead to better outcomes?
	Adhere To All Relevant Court Training	Be properly trained in court specific classes.	Safety Intervention and Permanency System (SIPS) training and other relevant training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper training will assist CAP in being involved in the overall goals of the court. • Will help CAP understand the entire process.
	Provide All Parties With All Relevant Case Documentation	To ensure clients are well informed of all stages of the case.	Provide all relevant documentation at least 72 hours in advance of hearings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients having all the information will make better informed decisions and will speed up case process.
	Contact Client Regularly and	To ensure that CA has all relevant information to	Contact client at least 72 hours in advance of hearings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate meeting client outside the courtroom just prior to hearings.

Role	Performance Measure	Objective	Tasks	Comments
Contract Attorney (CA)	Well Before Each Hearing	property advocate for the parents.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact may potentially increase chances of avoiding protracted litigation. • Frequent contact will better prepare both attorney and client in the event the matter goes to litigation. • Attorneys should contact with their client regularly throughout the case.
	Engage In Settlement Negotiations And Mediation When Appropriate	To speed up permanency for the children and avoid litigation if possible.	Review of sample cases and client surveys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlements can speed up permanency for our children. • Settlements can lead to better engagement for parents. • Settlements avoid litigation.
	Adhere To All Relevant Court Training	Be properly trained in court specific classes.	Safety Intervention and Permanency System (SIPS) training and other relevant training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper training will assist CAs in being involved in the overall goals of the court. • Will help CAs understand the entire process involving four and under dependency.
	Provide All Parties With All Relevant Case Documentation	To ensure clients are well informed of all stages of the case.	Tracking system?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients having all the information will make better informed decisions and will speed up case process.
Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)	Consistent Attendance Of Court Hearings, CFT Team Meetings	To ensure information about children is provided.	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The more meetings CASA members attend, the more informed all parties will be with regard to our children.
	DFS/CASA Reports Prepared And Distributed To All Parties In A Timely Manner	To ensure all information is available to parties.	Provide all relevant documentation at least 72 hours in advance of hearings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients having all the information will make better informed decisions and will speed up case process.
	Adhere to Training Requirements of CASA program	For CASA members to be sufficiently trained.	Conduct a minimum of 4 CASA training classes annually, using National CASA standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CASA members must be trained on current child welfare issues, initiative, and practices that will impact their advocacy.
	Frequent Contact With Children, Caregivers, Family	To ensure comprehensive	CASA will visit children twice a month.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face meetings with CASA and children will improve the child's well-

Role	Performance Measure	Objective	Tasks	Comments
	Members, and Siblings	services for children and families.		<p>being and help our children develop meaningful relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent visits with all team members will assist in timely permanency.
	Adhere To All Relevant Court Training	Be properly trained in court specific classes.	Safety Intervention and Permanency System (SIPS) training and other relevant training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper training will assist CASA in being involved in the overall goals of the court. • Will help CASA understand the entire process involving four and under dependency.

APPENDIX C. ACRONYM LIST

Acronym	Definition
ABA	American Bar Association
BRK	Blue Ribbon for Kids
CA	Contract Attorney
CAP	Children's Attorney Project
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate
CCSD	Clark County School District
CCSS	Clark County Social Services
CCWIS	Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System
CFT	Child and Family Treatment Team
CIC	Community Improvement Council
CMIS	Community Management Information System
CQI	Continuous Quality Improvement
DA	District Attorney
DFS	Department of Family Services
DOJ	Department Of Justice's
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
FYSB	Family and Youth Services Bureau
GAL	Guardian Ad Litem
IL	Independent Living
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCJFCJ	National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
NVCIP	Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Program
OJP	Office of Justice Programs
PPH	Preliminary Protective Hearing
PSA	Public Service Announcement
QPI	Quality Parenting Initiative
SIPS	Safety Intervention and Permanency System
SPD	Special Public Defender
TA	Technical Assistance
TTA	Training and Technical Assistance