



**SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS PERMANENT JUDICIAL
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families

September 28, 2018

Meeting Notebook

The Supreme Court of Texas
201 West 14th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

**Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families**

**September 28, 2018
Meeting Notebook**

Table of Contents

Meeting Agenda

Commission, Committee and Collaborative Council Member List..... 1

Minutes from May 4, 2018 Commission Meeting 2

September 28, 2018 Report to Commission 3

Presentation Slides for Executive Director Report..... 4

Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families
Supreme Court of Texas Courtroom
201 West 14th Street
Austin, Texas
September 28, 2018
9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Meeting Agenda

- 9:30 Commencement / Opening Remarks – The Honorable Eva Guzman
- 9:45 First Order of Business – The Honorable Rob Hofmann
 - 1. Adopt Minutes from May 4, 2018, Tab 2
- 9:50 Presentation on 2018 Legal Representation Study
- 10:30 Break
- 10:45 Presentation on Education of Children Placed in Residential Treatment Settings
- 11:15 DFPS/CPS Update
- 11:30 Executive Director Report / Voting Matters
- 12:00 Working Lunch
- 12:30 Collaborative Council Member Presentations
- 1:00 Commissioner Updates
- 1:45 Break
- 2:00 Commissioner Updates, Continued
- 2:45 Collaborative Council Input
- 3:00 Jurist in Residence Report
- 3:15 Office of Court Administration Update
- 3:30 New Business / Adjourn

2019 Meeting Schedule:

February 8 and May 31, 2019 at State Bar of Texas or Courtroom of the Supreme Court of Texas

INSERT - TAB 1

CHILDREN'S COMMISSION MEMBERS

Hon. Eva Guzman, Chair
 Hon. Harriet O'Neill, Chair Emeritus
 Hon. Rob Hofmann, Vice Chair
 Lt. Col. Sonya Batchelor
 Paula Bibbs-Samuels
 Kristene Blackstone

Hon. Susan Brown
 Hon. Darlene Byrne
 Hon. Gary Coley
 Sheila Sturgis Craig
 Heather Fleming
 Rep. Helen Giddings

Dr. Andy Keller
 Hon. Lawrence Lujan
 Hon. Piper McCraw
 Hon. Selina Mireles
 Cindy Patrick
 Hon. Ronald Pope

Hon. Frank Rynd
 Hon. Peter Sakai
 Hon. Michael Schneider
 Luanne Southern
 Vicki Spriggs
 Hon. Carlos Villalon

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE

Hon. Eva Guzman,
Chair
 Hon. Harriet O'Neill,
Chair Emeritus
 Hon. Rob Hofmann,
Vice Chair
 Hon. Piper McCraw
 Hon. Michael Schneider
 Vicki Spriggs

*Staff: Tina Amberboy
 Monica Mahoney*

BASIC PROJECTS

Hon. Michael Schneider,
Chair
 Sarah Crockett
 Mary Christine Reed
 Carolyne Rodriguez
 Tanya Rollins
 Hon. Peter Sakai
 Hon. Cynthia Wheless

*Staff: Tina Amberboy
 Dylan Moench
 Monica Mahoney*

TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS

Vicki Spriggs, *Chair*
 Elizabeth Kromrei
 Hon. Virginia Schnarr
 Hon. Carlos Villalon

*Staff: Patrick Passmore
 Monica Mahoney*

*OCA Advisory:
 Darrell Childers
 Anissa Johnson
 Casey Kennedy
 Mena Ramon
 David Slayton
 Charlotte Velasco*

TRAINING PROJECTS

Hon. Piper McCraw, *Chair*
 Hon. Mark Atkinson
 Tymothen Belseth
 Cathy Cockerham
 Barbara Elias-Perciful
 Debra Emerson
 Hon. Richard Garcia
 Tracy Harting
 Pam Kemp
 Tanya Rollins
 Fairy Davenport Rutland
 Hon. Ellen Smith
 Elizabeth Watkins

*Staff: Milbrey Raney
 Dylan Moench
 Andrea Vicencio*

FOSTER CARE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Hon. Rob Hofmann, *Chair*
 ShaLynn Andrews
 Joy Baskin
 Hon. Alyce Bondurant
 Lori Duke
 Dr. Monica Faulkner
 Maya Guerra Gamble
 Dr. David Gardner
 Andy Homer
 Kelly Kravitz
 Hon. Aurora Martinez Jones
 Kristine Mohajer
 Hon. Cathy Morris
 Wanda Peña
 Michael Redden
 Carol Self
 Ian Spechler
 Julie Wayman

*Staff: Jamie Bernstein
 Andrea Vicencio*

COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Tymothen Belseth
 M. Lynn Chamberlin
 Irene Clements
 Bill Connolly
 Sarah Crockett
 De Shaun Ealoms
 Barbara Elias-Perciful
 Debra Emerson
 Laura Figueroa
 Mike Foster
 Will Francis

Mara Friesen
 Sadie Funk
 Helen Gaebler
 Teal de la Garza
 Christine Gendron
 Sandra Hachem
 David Halpern
 Ashley Harris
 Lisa Harst
 Bruce Kendrick
 Knox Kimberly

Kelly Kravitz
 Richard Lavallo
 Tracy Levins
 Hon. F. Scott McCown, ret.
 Gabriella McDonald
 Susan McDowell
 Pamela McPeters
 Kate Murphy
 Katie Olse
 Jon Olson
 Judy Powell

Mary Christine Reed
 Carolyne Rodriguez
 Tanya Rollins
 Johana Scot
 Janet Sharkis
 Andrea Sparks
 Ian Spechler
 Jeanne Stamp
 Gloria Terry
 Kenneth Thompson

STAFF

Tina Amberboy, Executive Director
 Jamie Bernstein, Assistant Director
 Jessica Arguijo, Communications Manager
 Tiffany Edwards, Executive Assistant
 Jocelyn Fowler, Staff Attorney
 Monica Mahoney, Program Specialist
 Dylan Moench, Staff Attorney
 Patrick Passmore, Grant Administrator
 Milbrey Raney, Training Director
 Andrea Vicencio, Executive Assistant
 Hon. Michael Massengale, Senior Judicial Advisor
 Hon. Dean Rucker, Jurist in Residence
Office of Court Administration

INSERT - TAB 2

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES
MINUTES OF MEETING
May 4, 2018
9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
The Supreme Court of Texas
Austin, Texas

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners	Attended	Did Not Attend
Chair, Hon. Eva Guzman, Justice, Supreme Court of Texas, Austin	✓	
Chair Emeritus, Hon. Harriet O’Neill, Justice, retired, Law Office of Harriet O’Neill, Austin		✓
Vice Chair, Hon. Rob Hofmann, Judge, 452nd District Court, Mason	✓	
Paula Bibbs-Samuels, Parent Representative, Slaton	✓	
Kristene Blackstone, Associate Commissioner for Child Protective Services, Dept. of Family and Protective Services, Austin	✓	
Hon. Gary Coley, Judge, 74th District Court, Waco		✓
Sheila Craig, Associate Commissioner, Office of Minority Health Statistics and Engagement, Health and Human Services Commission, Austin	✓	
Heather Fleming, Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor, Austin	✓	
Hon. Helen Giddings, Texas House of Representatives, District 109, Dallas		✓
Dr. Andrew Keller, President and Chief Executive Officer, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Dallas	✓	
Hon. Lawrence Lujan, Chief Judge, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, El Paso	✓	
Hon. Piper McCraw, Judge, 469th Judicial District Court, McKinney	✓	
Cindy Patrick, Senior Program Officer, Meadows Foundation, Dallas		✓
Hon. Ronald Pope, Judge, 328th District Court, Richmond		✓
Hon. Frank Rynd, General Counsel, Archdiocese Galveston-Houston	✓	
Hon. Peter Sakai, Judge, 225th District Court, San Antonio		✓
Hon. Michael Schneider, Judge, 315th District Court, Houston	✓	
Luanne Southern, Senior Director of Texas Strategic Consulting, Casey Family Programs, Austin	✓	
Vicki Spriggs (by proxy Andy Homer), Chief Executive Officer, Texas CASA, Inc., Austin	✓	
Hon. Carlos Villalon, Associate Judge, Child Protection Court of the Rio Grande, Edinburg	✓	
Lt. Col. Travis Walters (by proxy Lt. Col. Sonya Batchelor), State Public Affairs Officer (FTUS), United States Air Force, Fort Worth	✓	
Hon. Royce West (by proxy Graham Kever), Texas Senate, District 23, Dallas	✓	
Senior Judicial Advisor		
Hon. Darlene Byrne, Judge, 126th District Court, Austin		✓
Hon. Michael Massengale, Justice, First Court of Appeals, Houston	✓	
Collaborative Council		
Tymothy Belseth, Research Coordinator, Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, The University of Texas, Austin	✓	
M. Lynn Chamberlin, Sr. Assistant County Attorney, Harris County Attorney’s Office	✓	
Irene Clements, President, National Foster Family Association, and Consultant, Butterfly Marketing, L.L.C., Pflugerville	✓	
William B. Connolly, Attorney, Connolly & Shireman, L.L.P., Houston		✓

	Attended	Did Not Attend
Sarah Crockett, Public Policy Coordinator, Texas CASA, Austin		✓
De Shaun Ealoms, Parent Program Specialist, Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin	✓	
Barbara Elias-Perciful, President, Texas Lawyers for Children, Dallas		✓
Debra Emerson, CPS Director of Permanency, Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin		✓
Laura Figueroa, The Arbitrage Group, Inc., Katy		✓
Mike Foster, Administrator, Central Texas Table of Grace		✓
Will Francis, Government Relations Director, National Association of Social Workers/Texas Chapter, Austin		✓
Mara Friesen, Deputy Director for Child Support, Office of the Texas Attorney General, Austin		✓
Sadie Funk, Executive Director, Texas Alliance for Infant Mental Health, Austin		✓
Helen Gaebler, Senior Research Attorney, William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law, The University of Texas School of Law, Austin		✓
Teal de la Garza, Attorney, Bill De La Garza & Associates, P.C., Houston	✓	
Christine Gendron, Executive Director, Texas Network of Youth Services, Austin	✓	
Christina Green, Director of Public Affairs, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Austin	✓	
Sandra Hachem, Senior Assistant County Attorney, Harris County Attorney's Office, Houston	✓	
David Halpern, Director, Promise Mentor Program, Seedling Foundation, Austin		✓
Ashley Harris, Director of Policy and Community Engagement, United Way of Texas, Austin	✓	
Bruce Kendrick, Director of Outreach, Embrace Texas, McKinney		✓
Knox Kimberly, Vice President for Advocacy and Education, Lutheran Social Services of the South, Austin	✓	
Kelly Kravitz, Foster Care Education and Policy Coordinator, Texas Education Agency, Austin		✓
Richard Lavallo, Legal Director, Disability Rights Texas, Austin		✓
Tracy Levins, State Development Specialist, Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health, The University of Texas, Austin		✓
Madeline McClure, Executive Director, Texas Association for the Protection of Children, Dallas		✓
Hon. F. Scott McCown, Clinical Professor and Director of the Children's Rights Clinic, The University of Texas School of Law, Austin		✓
Gabriella McDonald, Pro Bono and New Projects Director, Texas Appleseed, Austin	✓	
Susan McDowell, Executive Director, LifeWorks, Austin		✓
Pamela McPeters, Director of Public Policy, Texas Association for the Protection of Children, Austin	✓	
Kate Murphy, Senior Policy Associate, Texans Care for Children, Austin	✓	
Katie Olse (by proxy Jesse Booher), Executive Director, Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, Austin		✓
Jon Olson, Director of Equity and Inclusion, Office of Minority Health Statistics and Engagement – HHSC, Austin		✓
Dr. Anu Partap, Assistant Professor in Pediatrics, Southwest Medical Center, Dallas		✓
Judy Powell, Communications Director, Parent Guidance Center, Austin		✓
Mary Christine Reed, Director, Texas Foster Youth Justice Project, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Austin	✓	
Carolyne Rodriguez, Independent Consultant, Austin	✓	
Tanya Rollins, State Disproportionality Manager, Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin	✓	
Johana Scot, Executive Director, Parent Guidance Center, Austin	✓	
Janet Sharkis, Executive Director, Texas Office for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities, Austin		✓
Andrea Sparks, Child Sex Trafficking Unit Administrator, Office of the Governor, Austin		✓
Ian Spechler, Attorney, formerly with Disability Rights Texas, Austin		✓
Jeanne Stamp, Senior Program Coordinator, Texas Homeless Education Office, Charles A. Dana Center, Austin		✓
Gloria Terry, Coalition President, Texas Council on Family Violence, Austin		✓
Kenneth Thompson, Fatherhood Program Specialist, Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin		✓

Attended	Did Not Attend
----------	----------------

Arabia Vargas, Chair, Bexar County Child Welfare Board, San Antonio	✓
Kelly White, Executive Director, LIFT Alliance, Austin	✓

Attending Committee Members and Guests

Sonya Batchelor, General Council, Texas Military Department, Austin
 Audrey Carmical, General Council, Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin
 Kim Dvorchak, Executive Director, National Association of Children’s Council, Denver
 David Feigen, Legislative Director, Office of Rep. Helen Giddings, Austin
 Andrew Homer, Director of Public Affairs, Texas CASA, Austin
 Graham Keever, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Royce West, Austin
 Crystal Leff-Piñon, Managing Attorney, The Family Helpline, Texas Legal Services Center, Austin
 Brandon Logan, Director for Center for Families a& Children, Texas Public Policy Foundation, Austin
 Marcellina Melvin, Director of Program Implementation for Child and Family Policy, Meadows Mental Health Institution, Houston
 Hon. Robin Sage, Senior District Judge, Judicial Engagement Team, Casey Family Programs, Livingston
 Rona Statman, Program Director, EveryChild, Inc., Austin
 Kristi Taylor, Executive Director, Judicial Commission on Mental Health

Attending Staff

Tina Amberboy, Executive Director, Children’s Commission
 Jessica Arguijo, Administrative Assistant, Children’s Commission
 Jamie Bernstein, Assistant Director, Children’s Commission
 Jocelyn Fowler, Staff Attorney, Children’s Commission
 Anissa Johnson, Program Specialist, Office of Court Administration
 Tim Kennedy, Video Conferencing Project Manager, Office of Court Administration
 Monica Mahoney, Administrative Assistant, Children’s Commission
 Dylan Moench, Staff Attorney, Children’s Commission
 Patrick Passmore, Grant Manager, Children’s Commission
 Milbrey Raney, Training Director, Children’s Commission
 Hon. Dean Rucker, Jurist in Residence, Children’s Commission
 Andrea Vicencio, Administrative Assistant, Children’s Commission

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING REMARKS, Justice Eva Guzman

Justice Eva Guzman called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Recognition of Guests Justice Guzman welcomed special guest Kim Dvorchak, Executive Director of the National Association of Counsel for Children; Lieutenant Colonel Sonya Batchelor, General Counsel of the Texas Military Department, in attendance on behalf of Lieutenant Colonel Travis Walters.

Commissioner Membership Changes

Justice Guzman announced that Judge Mary Murphy has transitioned off the Children's Commission. Justice Guzman also announced that Governor Abbott has appointed Heather Fleming as the new *ex officio* member from the Office of the Governor.

Committee Member Changes

There were no committee membership changes.

Collaborative Council Membership Changes

There were no changes to the Collaborative Council.

Staff Member Changes

Ms. Tina Amberboy announced that the Children's Commission hired a new staff attorney to fill the position vacated by Kristi Taylor when she transitioned to the Executive Director position for the new Judicial Commission on Mental Health. Jocelyn Fowler started at the Commission on May 1st and will work primarily on the Commission's projects related to trauma, disproportionality, tribal relationships, and parent support.

Adoption of February 9, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Justice Guzman directed members to Tab 2 of the Meeting Notebook and noted that members had the opportunity to review the February 9, 2018 minutes. Justice Guzman asked if there were any corrections or discussion, and none were noted.

ACTION: Justice Guzman asked for a motion to adopt the meeting minutes of the February 9, 2018 meeting. A motion was made to adopt the minutes; the motion was seconded. The attending members voted to approve and adopt the meeting minutes unanimously.

COMMISSION MEMBER UPDATES

Hon. Robert Hofmann reported the ApplyTexas common application will include a question specifically about foster care for the first time in the 2018 -2019 application cycle. If an applicant indicates that they were ever in foster care or adopted, there will be a follow up question that will relay information to college administrators so they can talk to students about tuition and fee waivers, introduce them to the foster care liaison, and discuss other supports. Judge Hofmann reported the Special Education Workgroup held a roundtable discussion at the University of Texas to discuss the education of children placed in residential treatment centers (RTCs). Also present were school district and charter school representatives, RTC representatives, and Texas Education Agency staff. There was much input and interest regarding how to improve information sharing, decision-making, and transportation planning. Judge Hofmann announced the Foster Care and Education Summit is being held July 9-10, 2018 at the Georgetown Austin Sheraton. Like the previous Summit, multi-disciplinary teams focused around the 11 CPS regions will include judges, attorneys, advocates, CASA representatives, educators, child welfare staff, and former foster youth. The teams will focus on early education through post-secondary education.

Hon. Michael Massengale reported as the Senior Judicial Advisor. Justice Massengale reported on the activities of the House Bill 7 Task Force, appointed by the Supreme Court of Texas after the close of the 85th legislative session. Justice Massengale highlighted three procedural issues discussed by a Task Force Subcommittee convened to review the increase of *Anders* filings at the Texas Supreme Court and the increase of parental termination cases that are causing a large increase in demand for reviewing petitions at the court. The subcommittee is working to prepare a set of guidelines for *Anders* briefs in an effort to streamline the process and review. Justice Massengale noted that after reviewing the issue and looking at procedures in other states, many parallels exist between termination cases and the criminal context, as well as many important differences. Justice Massengale mentioned that many states have rejected *Anders* all together as it was found to be inappropriate for child protection cases. In addition to a set of proposals to streamline and guide *Anders*, the subcommittee is also thinking about proposing an alternative that would be a complete departure from *Anders* or possibly rejecting *Anders*. The subcommittee is considering a procedure that would give lawyers some assurance that they are not required to pursue an appeal in the absence of active participation and authorization by the client. Justice Massengale extended the invitation for others to share their thoughts with him and presented the idea of evaluating the merits of a potential appeal. Justice Massengale discussed issues surrounding an appellate lawyer's duties to preserve error after the entry of a final order but before an appellant brief gets filed. The subcommittee performed a close review of the current timelines and rules, noting that the current rules constrain a lawyer's ability to file a motion for a new trial and produce evidence that might be necessary to either advance an issue of ineffective assistance of counsel, or identify issues that can't be identified without the benefit of a record. Justice Massengale noted under the current rules an attorney can only get the record after initiating an appeal. The subcommittee is considering a proposal that would include more time in the post judgment and motion for new trial stages and provide the parent's lawyer access to the record during that period of time so that errors can be preserved.

Sheila Craig introduced herself as the Associate Commissioner at the Health and Human Services Commission's Center for Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities (CEDD), also referred to as the Office of Minority Health Statistics and Engagement (OMHSE). The OMHSE's focus has been to examine data by race and ethnicity, to look at how populations are faring in various state systems, and to work with all systems to examine policies, practices, programs, and services to fulfill the OMHSE "Texas Model." The Texas Model framework includes examining data, developing leaders to interpret data and delve into core issues and barriers preventing better outcomes for populations served.

Ms. Craig reported that only 15 of the 25 positions at OMHSE are currently filled due to the program being defunded by the 85th Legislature. Ms. Craig reported OMHSE applied to various institutions for funding and discussed a possibility of transferring part or all the programming to a university. Ms. Craig stated that after August 31, 2018, Texas will be the only state in the nation without an Office of Minority Health.

Ms. Craig also reported on a recent collaboration with CPS called, "Developing Equity Champions" and noted OMHSE will continue to develop trainings with CPS and DFPS staff to facilitate the trainings, holding up to 15 sessions, each hosting about 20 participants, for the "Equity: Together We Can Achieve It" curriculum, available at no cost until August 31, 2018. Ms. Craig reported on training with the City of

Houston's Health Department, Housing Department, and Health and Mental Health Department to become accredited organizations that ensure equitable outcomes for the people they serve by examining their own internal policies, practices, and data. OMHSE performed the Equity Champions training with the City of Austin Health Department, along with the three other city health departments, to develop a program that can help staff within those organizations pass along the work that OMHSE does at the Health and Human Services Commission. OMHSE also worked with Medicaid's Managed Care staff to develop culturally competency plans, as well as a weekly Health Equity newsletter that is distributed to about 19,000 people, and a Mental Health Coordinator position. Ms. Craig reported OMHSE provided facilitation and training to the Texas Association of Charitable Clinics and The Wilco (Williamson County) Wellness Alliance Conference in April 2018. Ms. Craig also announced a statewide collaborative initiative to address health disparities wherein OMHSE, through a partnership with city health departments, helped complete a total of 13,070 screenings, with 928 persons identified with abnormal results, and about 47%, or 436, of those identified receiving services. That grant continues until 2020, with the goal to reduce obesity and chronic disease in communities.

Hon. Carlos Villalon received an invitation from NCJFCJ in March for his Court to be featured in an article about the NCJFCJ's Resource Guidelines Implementation Sites, which among many things, discussed the challenges his court faces operating near the border of Mexico. Judge Villalon also reported working with local collaboratives, including a new one formed by Valley Children. Judge Villalon reported that on December 15, 2017 Erin Jones, Sarah McGobbler, and Amanda Perkins from the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, visited his court giving a one-day overview of Trust Based Relational Intervention or TBRI to his child welfare stakeholders. Judge Villalon also reported on a visit on April 17th from Trevor Woodruff, Deputy Commissioner for DFPS, to observe his court. Also, that he has received an invitation to participate in the Casey Family Programs 21st Century Systems Meeting later in the month.

Hon. Frank Rynd announced the Catholic Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, with Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops, launched a program in March 2018 called St. Joseph Ministry, to be activated in every diocese in the state. Judge Rynd explained the program is intended to help Catholic parishioners get involved in foster care by becoming foster parents, being supporters of other foster parents, and helping foster families. Judge Rynd and Jennifer Carr-Allmon, Executive Director of the Texas Catholic Conference, have held ongoing meetings with Judge Bonnie Hellums, and Justice Evelyn Keyes to discuss ways to increase foster home capacity.

Ms. Luanne Southern updated the Commission about her recent participation in a meeting called Education Leads Home with an organization called Civic Enterprises of Washington, D.C. Their focus is homeless youth and improving graduation rates of homeless youth. Education Leads Home noticed that several districts in Texas have a 90% success rate of graduating homeless youth and came to Austin to find out how programs focused on this population operate and return such high success rates. Education Leads Home met with the Meadows Foundation and the Rees-Jones Foundation, and both organizations expressed interest in the topic and offered to assist in helping the 213,000 homeless youth that have aged out of foster care. Ms. Southern also reported that a community-based meeting with CPS Region 1

staff and the Texas Alliance for Child and Family Services is scheduled for May 15, 2018 to learn about the challenges, strengths, and issues related specifically to child and family services for children in foster care and families involved with DFPS prevention services. The meeting is aimed at bringing together community providers, judges, and other interested stakeholders from Region 1.

Dr. Andy Keller reported on lingering effects from last year's Hurricane Harvey which are having a dramatic impact on the mental health and correctional systems. Dr. Keller correlated the dramatic increase in mental health needs with the dramatic increase in Harris County jails' populations. Not only jail population increased largely due to mental health needs, but also because of procedural issues. Dr. Keller also noted the number of children with severe emotional disturbances has doubled, explaining the illnesses don't always begin as post-traumatic stress but can begin as anxiety and depression. Dr. Keller introduced Marcy Mallard from the Hackett Center, which is an operating program working with individual school districts and individual providers to match and build new programming. Dr. Keller reported the Greater Houston Community Foundation awarded 6.2 million dollars of grants to expand mental health services across Harris County for children with mental health needs, including to children in foster care. The grant was made possible through a partnership with the Baylor College of Medicine and the Texas Children's Hospital, another large grant through the UT-Houston Health Sciences Center, and other smaller grants through Memorial Herman Health System of Houston.

Dr. Keller announced Rebuild Texas is expanding outside of Houston, creating Telehealth services connections. One in the development stages is being referred to as Child Psychiatry Access Programs, which will provide telehealth, telephonic, and web-based support to pediatricians and primary care providers. Dr. Keller announced The Steve Fund's fifth annual "Young, Gifted & @Risk" (YGAR) Symposium in November 2018 at the University of Texas in Austin. The Steve Fund is national foundation committed to health equity, particularly to building support for students of color entering college and continuing through college.

Ms. Heather Fleming introduced herself and noted she is looking forward to working with the Commission.

Hon. Judge Lujan reported he attended the CPS Community Appreciation Breakfast in El Paso on behalf of the Children's Commission. Judge Lujan also informed the Commission that CPS hosted a community forum in February 2018 to discuss the Family-Based Safety Service (FBSS) Pilot Program that began March 1, 2018. The Pilot Program will transfer case management services to Pathways Youth and Family Services Incorporated, a non-profit service provider and includes Brewster, Culberson, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, and Presidio Counties, with a plan to add more locations, serving approximately 2000 families and 3000 in the five-county area. Judge Lujan noted that all of the courts and stakeholders involved are very optimistic the Pilot Program will be successful. Judge Lujan announced, at the request of faith-based groups, the 65th District Court launched the Clergy in Court Program, wherein faith-based groups work with CASA and CPS to determine how they can help families and children in the child welfare system.

Judge Lujan also reported on El Paso County's Future Internship Program, started by the El Paso Women's Bar Association, the County Attorney's Office, and the 65th District Court. The program provides a six week, 20-hour a week internship to youth who have aged out of the foster care system. The program provides interns an opportunity to gain experience in county offices, such as the Medical Examiner's Office, Juvenile Justice Center, the courts, County Attorney's Office, and the District Attorney's Office.

Judge Lujan also commented on the importance of the preservation of cultural and community ties for children in foster care.

Mr. Andrew Homer, on behalf of Ms. Vicki Spriggs, announced that Texas CASA produced a one-pager detailing the number of CASA volunteers and children served by the volunteers. Mr. Homer reported at the end of FY 2017 there were 10,424 volunteers who served 29,727 children. Texas CASA served 58.4% of the kids in care over the course of the year statewide. The number of volunteers increased by 14% over the course of FY 2017. Mr. Homer noted that in years past Texas CASA had about a 5% increase in volunteers and there is typically a 20% turnover of volunteers each year. Mr. Homer reported that Texas CASA emphasized to volunteers the need to do more to serve kids in Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC). Mr. Homer updated the Commission on the Texas CASA statewide marketing and recruitment campaign and noted an outreach effort to better recruit and retain more male volunteers and volunteers in the Hispanic and Latino communities, as well as Spanish speakers. Mr. Homer reported that Texas CASA is also working with the Department on ways to better connect and work with churches and faith-based institutions.

Mr. Homer reported on Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE) and family finding efforts. Texas CASA emphasized the need for volunteers to visit with children placed outside of their home communities and secured funding to assist in this effort. Mr. Homer announced a new initiative, Computers for CASA, which was passed by Senate Bill 78, sponsored by Senator Jane Nelson, to allow Texas CASA programs to receive computers from the State of Texas surplus supply. Computers for CASA kicked off on February 1, 2018 and will provide an opportunity for children in care to better access a computer and accompanying technologies.

Mr. Homer reported on the work of the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care (SCTIC) and announced the Texas CASA Child Welfare Primer on July 26, 2018 in Austin. The Primer will focus on youth voice, youth engagement in the Court/legal process, and on service planning.

Ms. Paula Bibbs-Samuels provided a reminder that she is a member of the Statewide Parent Collaboration Group, which meets at least monthly. The group will continue to meet within the region to support, educate, and inform other parents involved with CPS. One of the Collaboration group members, Michelle Hansford, was selected as the National Family Consultant. Another member of the group, Verlyn Johnson, performed a Trauma Informed Care training with the group. The Collaboration Group is helping the Birth Parent National Network with education on the Family First Prevention Services Act. Ms. Bibbs-Samuels announced she has been invited to speak at Communities in Schools of

Greater Tarrant County in August 2018. The main discussion will include the protections of parents when their children and family are in care. Having a CPS case in the past, Ms. Bibbs-Samuels noted she is dedicated, along with other parents, to working in the regions and speaking with parents weekly. Ms. Bibbs-Samuels informed the Commission of a parent and parent teen group that is available to educate, inform, and offer support, if needed. Ms. Bibbs-Samuels also expressed concern about the dismissal of birth parents in the child welfare system and requested that the Commission do more to increase inclusion and interactions with parents involved in the child welfare system. Ms. Bibbs-Samuels also mentioned that the Parent Collaboration Group is very supportive of increasing the CPS/DFPS workforce and to decrease the number of cases coming into the system each year, which she believes will allow caseworkers to better meet the needs of the families that they serve. Ms. Bibbs-Samuels noted that parents are often not included in the CPS process and resist the process as a result.

Hon. Michael Schneider announced that all the Harris County courts dealing with CPS cases are in standard courtrooms now, after being displaced by Hurricane Harvey. Judge Schneider reported on the dual status workgroup in place in Harris County Child Protective Services, which is separate from the Department and has its own budget, staff, and a newly hired coordinator, Kelly Opot to spearhead dual status efforts. Ms. Opot is helping to establish rules and procedures for how children and youth who are considered dual status experience the court/legal system. Judge Schneider stated that although Harris County doesn't have its own dual status court yet, there is a staffing process in place to ensure communication is ongoing between judges and others involved in the youth's child protection and juvenile case. Judge Schneider announced another development with OCA staff to the CPCMS database to add more data fields specifically related to medication to help inform on the specific diagnosis and the doctors prescribing the medications.

Judge Schneider also reported as the Chair of the Basic Committee. The Basic Committee held a conference call on April 20, 2018 to discuss the committee's projects. Judge Schneider reported the Family Helpline now has a staff of three full-time and three part-time attorneys. The Helpline staff have made presentations to several organizations around the state in 2018 and is negotiating with the Children's Commission on taking editorial responsibility for the Parent Resource Guide.

Judge Schneider announced the 2018 Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS) application to become certified in child welfare is available online and is open until May 7, 2018. Applicants will be notified in July of 2018 of the Board's decision to admit them to take the exam. The exam will be administered in Austin on October 15, 2018. Judge Schneider noted the Commission announced it will offer a TBLS exam fee reimbursement of \$300 to attorneys and judges who become board certified once the results are published in February 2019.

Judge Schneider gave an update on the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care (SCTIC) and its four strategic workgroups: Child Welfare System Reform, Organizational Leadership, Cross-Systems Collaboration, and Funding Data and Evaluation. Judge Schneider announced that several of the SCTIC members and the Commission staff will attend a roundtable discussion on trauma-informed care (TIC) sponsored by Representative Rick Miller on May 8, 2018.

Judge Schneider lastly reported on the Commission's participation on the DFPS Public-Private Partnership to work on the implementation of community-based care (CBC), specifically how work duties will transition to the private provider once case management services are transferred.

Hon. Piper McCraw announced there is a new executive director of the Collin County CASA program. Judge McCraw commented that Collin County is fortunate to have 100% CASA rate and that Collin County has seen an increase of male CASA volunteers in the courtrooms. Judge McCraw also reported on the success of the Focus Fatherhood program and noted the Focus Motherhood program is in the pilot phase.

Judge McCraw reported as the Chair of the Training Committee. The Training Committee had a phone conference on April 17, 2018 and reviewed and discussed current and future projects. The committee launched the judicial scholarships for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) annual conference, held in Denver on July 22 - 25, 2018 and judicial and attorney scholarships to the National Association of Counsel for Children's (NACC's) annual conference and pre-conference Red Book Training, held in San Antonio on August 23 - 25, 2018. The NCJFCJ scholarship process will be conducted in partnership with the Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ), and both the NCJFCJ and NACC scholarships will cover the conference registration and reimbursement of conference related expenses. Ms. Milbrey Raney (Commission Training Director) reported that 12 scholarships had been received for the NCJFCJ conference so far. Additional reporting included information about the Child Welfare Judges Conference (CWJC) scheduled for November 12 - 14, 2018 at the Sheraton in Georgetown. Also, a conference call with the CWJC Curriculum Committee is scheduled for May 16, 2018 to discuss training topics and speakers. Further, that the Children's Commission provided 47 scholarships to DFPS and HHSC attorneys and staff to attend twelve hours of curriculum content for the two-day CPS track within the Texas District and County Attorney's Association (TDCAA) four-day Crimes Against Children Conference, held April 11 - 12, 2018 at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos. This was the first time the Children's Commission partnered with the TDCAA. The Children's Commission also provided 43 scholarships to the April 19th and 20th CLE hosted by the newly formed State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law Section, titled the First Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course. Additional attorney scholarship opportunities have been announced for the upcoming Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) one-day track held within the State Bar's Advanced Family Law course, and for the NACC conference and pre-conference Red Book Training. Seventeen applications have been received for the CAN scholarships and twenty-nine attorney scholarship applications have been received for the NACC conference. The ninth Trial Skills Training (TST) will be held in July 2018 at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos. The Commission approved 21 of the 64 applications received and sent notice to the final training invitees and the remaining forty-three applicants and all their judges on May 1, 2018.

Hon. Robin Sage announced she was in attendance on behalf of Judge Tina Callahan and Judge Mary Brown, both family court judges in Dallas County. Judge Sage reported someone the interest in Dallas County to establish a Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) Court like the one that Judge Katrina Griffith has in Harris County. A Dallas County PMC Court would be able to address the 560 kids in care that have been in care for more than two years. Judge Sage reported that a number of Dallas family court

judges met with Judge Griffith to discuss the establishment of a PMC Court in Dallas. Judge Sage remarked that a Dallas PMC Court would ultimately be funded by the legislature like the other 24 Child Protection Courts (CPCs), and would cover the salary of the judge and a court coordinator. Judge Sage asked the Commission to consider providing interim funding to allow a PMC Court to get started and establish a track record before the next legislative session. Judge Sage explained that Dallas County has been asked to provide court rooms, security, and telephones for the court staff.

Justice Guzman announced the Commission will vote on Judge Sage's proposal during the time dedicated to voting matters on the agenda.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Tina Amberboy updated the Commission that the Court Improvement Program (CIP) was reauthorized and funded through 2021 as part of the Family First Services Act that was included in the budget agreement signed in by the President in February 2018. Ms. Amberboy noted that training and data funds have not yet been received but are expected to be deposited before the end of the current fiscal year. Ms. Amberboy announced Commission staff will travel to Washington, D.C. with DFPS staff to attend the annual CIP Meeting in July 2018. Ms. Amberboy expressed hope in receiving program instruction for the new CIP and learn more from the Children's Bureau about their interest in the judicial and court systems being more involved in prevention and early intervention services. Ms. Amberboy also updated the Commission on efforts to engage and improve the responsiveness and relationship with the Collaborative Council. A Collaborative Council directory is projected for completion in Summer 2018, and an in-person Collaborative Council meeting has been planned for November 12, 2018 on the first day of the Child Welfare Judges Conference (CWJC), which will be held at the Sheraton in Georgetown, Texas. In June 2018, the Commission staff will meet to review all projects for fiscal year 2019. Ms. Amberboy noted the staff will plan to present to the Commission at the September meeting.

Voting Matters

Ms. Amberboy directed members to Tab 5 of the notebook to review additional projects for FY 2018: NACC online Red Book Training course; funding of a PMC Court in Dallas through the Office of Court Administration; funding to appoint experienced child welfare judges as visiting judges on CPC dockets through the Office of Court Administration; and funding to promote or fund normalcy activities through local communities.

ACTION: Justice Guzman announced the Commission will vote on the proposed additional and amended projects for FY 2018 as described under Tab 5.

Justice Guzman asked for a motion to approve the expenditure of \$3,000 to the NACC for 30 slots for the NACC online Red Book Training. A motion was made to approve the budget item; the motion was seconded. The attending members voted to approve and adopt the budget for the NACC training unanimously.

Justice Guzman asked for a motion to approve a grant for an amount not to exceed \$61,874 for the Office of Court Administration to support a PMC Court in Dallas. A motion was made to approve the budget

item; the motion was seconded. The attending members voted to approve and adopt the budget for the PMC Court unanimously.

Justice Guzman asked for a motion to approve a second grant for the Office of Court Administration in the amount of \$26,004 to fund experienced child welfare judges to sit as visiting judges on CPC dockets when coverage is needed. A motion was made to approve the budget item; the motion was seconded. The attending members voted to approve and adopt the budget for the visiting judges unanimously.

Justice Guzman asked for a motion to approve a grant in the amount of \$100,000 for normalcy activities in local communities. A motion was made to approve the budget item; the motion was seconded. The attending members voted to approve and adopt the budget for normalcy activities unanimously.

Ms. Amberboy informed the Commission one more update would come from Patrick Passmore, on behalf of Vicki Spriggs as Chair of the Technology Projects Committee.

Mr. Patrick Passmore announced the Data & Technology Projects Committee met April 18, 2018 to review and discuss future projects. Mr. Passmore discussed the proposed changes to the search criteria in the Notice and Engagement Tool, noting responses to the user satisfaction survey conducted last year indicated some users were unable to locate query information in the system due to the limitations from an exact search criterion. Mr. Passmore explained an updated was released in April 2018 and relaxed the requirements of the exact spelling to approximate match to circumvent any inconsistency in the spelling of the child's names. The update also added a second search option requiring only the county and case number.

Mr. Passmore updated the Commission on the application programming interface project with the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to allow more courts to upload their hearing data into the notice and engagement application. The overall goal of the project is to expand the hearing notification tool to all courts hearing child protection cases, providing parties with up-to-date hearing information and alternative means of notification. A meeting is scheduled for May 7, 2018 to discuss the pilot program, which will be implemented in Judge Darlene Byrne's courtroom.

The Notice and Engagement Tool increased from 594 total users to 995 users as of April 2018. OCA and the Commission have been working together to promote the use of the system. Mr. Passmore also reported that with help from CASA, video conferencing systems are now in 42 of 71 CASA program offices.

Ms. Kristi Taylor provided an update on the newly-formed Judicial Commission on Mental Health (JCMH). The Court of Criminal Appeals and Supreme Court held a joint hearing in January bringing witnesses and experts to testify on needs across the mental health landscape in Texas and especially in regard to how the needs impact the judicial system. Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute and the Hogg Foundation have been integrally involved. The two high courts named 33 commissioners by court order and is waiting to fill two of the three *ex officio* positions. The JCMH plans to establish a

Collaborative Council with around 40 participants. for the entire JCMH will hold its first meeting on May 15, 2018. The goal of the meeting is to introduce everyone and discuss a strategic plan. The JCMH will hold a Mental Health Summit in October in Houston, October 22 – 23, 2018.

COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Gabriella McDonald, Pro Bono and New Projects Director, Texas Appleseed, and Ms. Christine Gendron, Executive Director, Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) presented the *Young, Alone, and Homeless in the Lone Star State: Policy Solutions to End Youth Homelessness in Texas*, published in November 2017 to the Commission, available online at: <https://www.texasappleseed.org/homeless-youth>. The presentations by Ms. McDonald and Ms. Gendron are available online at <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/commission-meetings/meeting-notebooks-and-reports/>.

COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL REPORT

Ms. Carlyne Rodriguez announced the Crawfish for Change fundraiser for the Change 1 organization is scheduled for May 20, 2018 in Austin.

Ms. Irene Clements, Executive Director, National Foster Parent Association announced May as National Mental Health Month and encouraged everyone to visit the website at: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may>. Ms. Clements noted that videos are available on Kinship care on the website, which is the main topic of National Foster Care month. Ms. Clements reported on work with the Child Welfare Information Gateway and noted materials were available for meeting attendees. Ms. Clements informed the Commission about the Horatio Alger scholarship program, which provides hundreds of scholarships yearly. The organization looks to support former foster care youth, those currently in care, or those adopted from foster care. Ms. Clements announced the National Foster Care Conference, scheduled for June 2018.

Mary Christine Reed, Texas Foster Youth Justice Project, reported on a recent youth she is working with who has reported experiencing multiple policy violations by DFPS while in foster care. Ms. Reed expressed concern that DFPS policies are routinely disregarded and policy violations are often met with no corrective action. Ms. Reed noted the legal issues the Foster Youth Justice Project regularly assists with, such as sibling access, lack of identification documents, and issues with inconsistency in the youth's legal name in identification documents.

Ms. Sandra Hachem, Senior Assistant County Attorney in Harris County, reported on the State Bar Child Protection Law Section's First Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course held in April 2018 and plans to post videos from the course on the Section's website at <https://childprotectionlawtx.com/>. Ms. Hachem also announced the Section's one-day Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) track during the State Bar's Advanced Family Law Course scheduled for August 2018.

Presentation from Ms. Kim Dvorchak, National Association of Counsel for Children

Ms. Dvorchak presented on the background and current work of the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC). Ms. Dvorchak noted that she has been the executive director of the NACC for one year

and previously was the director of the National Juvenile Defender Center. Ms. Dvorchak stated the mission of NACC is to improve the lives of children and families by ensuring justice in court proceedings. NACC has focused on issues such as access to counsel and the quality of legal representation from both a training and policy perspective. Ms. Dvorchak described NACC's work on training and certification for individual practitioners to elevate the practice of child welfare law, culminating in the NACC's Child Welfare Legal Specialization (CWLS). NACC is the only national organization accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA) to certify attorneys in child welfare law. NACC has certified over 800 lawyers, with approximately 600 that are currently active, certified attorneys. Ms. Dvorchak discussed the Red Book Training and publication offered by NACC.

DFPS UPDATE

Kristene Blackstone, DFPS Associate Commissioner reported the FBSS pilot has been launched in El Paso, working with Pathways, who is the contractor for the FBSS pilot. Pathways has in turn partnered with a local, long standing, special service provider in El Paso to deliver the services. There are currently 55 employees doing FBSS work for the Department and have been in place since March 1. The agency is still in the process of transitioning the legacy cases. The contractor hired several licensed professional counselors and other people who are earning hours towards becoming LPC's, to do the work. DFPS will announce a second site for FBSS through community-based care and the next two catchment areas for foster care through community-based care. Lastly, the Department is analyzing the Family First Prevention Services Act to determine the costs as well as other changes that would be required of the agency and the state. A survey was sent to several providers across the state, to get their sense of the Act's provisions. The Act is intended to move Title IV-E funding from the back end of the foster care system to the front end with additional emphasis on prevention.

JURIST IN RESIDENCE REPORT

Hon. Dean Rucker introduced Milbrey Raney to highlight the aspect of training at the TDCAA.

Ms. Milbrey Raney reported the Commission helped to provide 12 hours of MCLE on CPS related issues inside of the four-day conference that TDCAA put on, called Crimes Against Children, in April. The commission staff worked with department staff, primarily Anna Ford, to hone in on topics and speakers that would be relevant for those attorneys who represent the state of Texas. During the two-day training, Dylan kicked it off with a legislative update. We were told to expect 65 people, and we got over 100 both days.

Lynn Chamberlain, a member of the Collaborative Council, and Doug Lowe, Commission Trial Skills Faculty also attended the conference and presented on a panel aimed at addressing the relationship between jurisdiction and agency attorneys. The panel talked about collaboration across county attorneys, district attorneys, and Department attorneys and highlighted Department resources that are being used by county and district attorney offices. Specifically, on the panel, there were two representatives of the legal representation committees' subcommittee on department representation.

Mr. Dylan Moench then provided an update about the Legal Representation Study. A study was conducted in 2011, yielding a small number of responses. The updated study launched earlier this year has produced 255 responses so far. Mr. Moench informed the commission the Children's survey was still active, allowing children over 12 to respond.

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

Ms. Anissa Johnson thanked the commission for the grant approval for the PMC Court and the funds to support the use of former associate judges to cover CPS dockets, when necessary. Ms. Johnson announced the Presiding Judges Retreat was coming up May 24 and 25. One of the agenda items being discussed was the need for new child detention court in the state, in addition to the PMC court, in Dallas.

NEW BUSINESS

Justice Guzman announced the next Commission Meeting dates: September 28, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

INSERT - TAB 3



**SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS PERMANENT JUDICIAL
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

Report to Commission
September 28, 2018

The Courtroom of the Supreme Court of Texas
201 West 14th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

September 28, 2018

Goal I: Encourage judicial leadership, accountability, and appropriate oversight of child protection cases to improve safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families.

I.A. Objective: Support statewide efforts to ensure and improve child safety.

I.A.1. Strategy: Collaborate and support agency and partner efforts to examine, secure, assess, and improve child safety.

Progress Report

Background:

With the Family First Prevention Service Act (FFPSA) and the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), it will be necessary for the Children’s Commission to engage with stakeholders more deeply on prevention efforts.

The CARA amendments to CAPTA require more focus on what are known as Plans of Safe Care, and although there is no specific court oversight of Plans of Safe Care, the judiciary is being asked to become familiar with the CARA amendments and partner with child welfare in a manner that makes existing and new Plans of Safe Care more meaningful.

FFPSA became effective on February 9, 2018. There are certain training provisions directly impacting the courts and Court Improvement Programs, but beyond that, FFPSA mandates that states seeking Title IV-E funding create and provide more robust prevention services for families in the state’s child welfare system.

09/28/18:

Texas has a Quality Improvement Center Collaborative Community Court Team (QIC-CCCT) site in Harris County. The demonstration site is charged with collaboratively addressing the health and substance use disorder treatment needs of infants, young children, and their parents or caregivers.

There is an Infant-Toddler Court Project in place and program staff is in the process of determining the responsibilities of individuals and organizations as they relate to the CAPTA / CARA amendments and how the provisions will be implemented locally.

I.B. Objective: Support the improvement of education outcomes for children in the conservatorship of DFPS to increase opportunities for educational progress, leading to a more productive and stable adult life.

I.B.1. Strategy: Implement the Texas Blueprint.

Progress Report

Background:

09/28/18:

The Foster Care and Education (FC&Ed) Committee was established in 2015 to continue the implementation of the Texas Blueprint recommendations, released in 2012. There are currently five FC&Ed workgroups: Data, Postsecondary, Special Education, Local Collaboration, and School Discipline. The Data Workgroup focuses on improved information-sharing and data collection between DFPS and the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The Postsecondary Workgroup focuses on issues of college or career readiness, as well as strategies to support persistence and graduation for students currently or formerly in care. The Special Education Workgroup focuses on the over and underrepresentation of students in foster care receiving special education services. The Local Collaboration Workgroup addresses strategies to strengthen collaboration at the local level. The School Discipline Workgroup explores strategies to reduce exclusionary discipline for students in foster care and promote improved behavioral health in the education setting.

IN FY2019, the structure of the FC&Ed collaboration will shift from a workgroup model to a project-centered model. The FC&Ed Committee will develop priorities and provide oversight for the statewide effort. As projects are identified, small groups will each meet periodically with a defined scope, deliverables, and a timeline. Initial projects will address the following issues:

- Collaborating to address education in Residential Treatment settings,
- Promoting increased awareness of early education for young children in foster care, and
- Developing tools and training to better support students in foster care with behavior challenges.

Although the structure will change, the core principles of strengthening collaboration between education, courts, and child welfare systems, developing cross-training opportunities, and encouraging data-driven decision-making remain fundamental to the FC&Ed committee model.

The FC&Ed Committee met on September 14, 2018 to review workgroup progress. The Local Collaboration, Postsecondary, Special Education, and School Discipline Workgroups last met on May 10, August 2, August 16, and September 25, respectively.

The Local Collaboration Workgroup recently provided input and helped to develop a resource entitled [Regional CPS Education Consortia: The Building Blocks to Engaging Community Stakeholders, Improving the Educational Outcomes for Students in Foster Care](#). The resource was designed to support the initiation and growth of local, cross-system partnerships aimed at addressing the education outcomes of children and youth in foster care.

The Postsecondary Workgroup developed a video script which was then used with a video created by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and Sam Houston State University. The video is primarily focused on relaying information about the state tuition and fee waiver to caregivers and youth. Additionally, the workgroup developed a one-page flow chart to illustrate the process of activating the waiver. The workgroup also provided input on a data infographic created by the UT Institute for Child and Family Well-being. These resources are available on the Children's Commission website.

On April 18, 2018, the Special Education Workgroup organized and hosted a Round Table discussion on the education of children and youth placed in residential settings. The Round Table report will be distributed at the September CC meeting. In addition to the issues raised at the Round Table, the Special Education Workgroup will continue to focus on the education of children in psychiatric hospitals and records transfer issues.

The CC, in partnership with the Texas Center for the Judiciary, hosted Texas's 2nd Foster Care and Education Summit on July 9-10, 2018 in Georgetown. The Summit included teams of judges, attorneys, CASAs, CPS staff, educators, and youth currently or formerly in foster care from every CPS region. The sessions ranged from postsecondary opportunities to accessing early education, with breakout discussions by discipline and region. Over 200 attendees participated in the Summit and were challenged to construct both bold ideas and realistic first steps to address the educational needs of students in foster care throughout Texas.

<p>I.C. Objective: Promote awareness of and embed a culture and practice among the judiciary and legal community around Trauma-Informed Care so that the legal and judicial community is aware, educated, and supportive of the concept and application.</p>	
<p><i>I.C.1. Strategy: Partner with Trauma and Mental Health advocates and agencies to implement and apply principles of Trauma-Informed Care in the respective disciplines.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>In July 2017, the Children’s Commission launched the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care (SCTIC), to elevate trauma-informed policy and practices in the Texas child welfare system by creating a statewide strategy to support system reform, organizational leadership, cross-systems collaboration, and community-led efforts with data-informed initiatives. The SCTIC has four Strategic Workgroups: Child Welfare System Reform, chaired by Andy Homer, Texas CASA; Organizational Leadership, chaired by Renee Calder Encinias, Hope Rising Ministries, Cross-systems Collaboration, chaired by Christine Gendron, TNOYS; and Funding, Data & Evaluation, chaired by Katy Bourgeois, Mission Capital.</p> <p>The SCTIC endeavors to raise awareness about Trauma-Informed Care through training and educational opportunities; lead a Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-informed Care to create a trauma-informed and trauma-responsive child welfare system that better meets the needs of children who have experienced trauma, and partner with other Texas and national trauma-informed workgroups and collaboratives</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The SCTIC has adopted four broad goals, each with specific strategies. The four workgroups have met monthly since April 2018 to draft strategies for accomplishing the goals set out by the SCTIC. The Commission created a website specifically for SCTIC members to access main documents and information on workgroups. The workgroups are nearing completion of their drafting stage, towards a final product which will include each workgroup’s goals and specific strategies in detail. Each workgroup will vote on the strategies developed in their workgroup by the end of September.</p> <p>SCTIC members were invited to attend the Judicial Summit on Mental Health which will be held in partnership with the Judicial Commission on Mental Health, in Houston over October 22-23, 2018. The first day of the Summit will include a morning plenary for professionals in law enforcement, mental health service providers, attorneys, judges, and child welfare stakeholders. The afternoon will include a Child and Youth track focused on trauma-informed progress in two of our state agencies (TJJD and DFPS), with additional presentations on preventing suicide, youth voice, and ensuring equity in our child welfare system. The full SCTIC will convene again on the second day of the Judicial Summit on Mental Health, October 23, and will include an overview of the four workgroup’s process, progress, and end results.</p> <p>After the Summit, the SCTIC Steering Committee will make necessary edits to the strategies. Thereafter, Commission staff will start drafting a Blueprint on Trauma-Informed Care to be published in early 2019.</p>
<p>I.D. Objective: Promote awareness of and provide training, resources, and support for addressing Human Trafficking and specifically domestic child sex trafficking so that the judicial system can assist in preventing and responding to the commercial sexual exploitation of children in DFPS’ conservatorship.</p>	

<p><i>I.D.1. Strategy: Collaborate with state and local partners to prevent and address commercial sexual exploitation of youth in foster care.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission partners with many key stakeholders with a goal of preventing and addressing commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth in foster care. In addition to serving on the Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force, the CC also works with the Office of the Texas Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team, the DFPS Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation team, and the Office of Court Administration to develop strategies to improve judicial handling of child welfare cases where children or youth are at high risk of becoming trafficking victims.</p> <p>The CC is focused primarily on providing information to judges and attorneys responsible for child welfare cases to raise awareness about human trafficking as it impacts children involved with the child welfare system.</p> <p>The CC also participates in the state and national trainings on human trafficking to stay informed about successful strategies to combat trafficking and develop expertise to relay information to judges and attorneys as needed.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The CC will continue to work with child welfare and court stakeholders to build capacity to address trafficking throughout the state. CC staff attended the first DFPS Human Trafficking Summit in Houston on August 20-22, 2018. On September 18-19, 2018, CC staff attended the Texas Judicial Institute on Domestic Child Sex Trafficking, sponsored by the NCJFCJ. The CC also provided travel scholarships for approximately 15 Texas judges to attend the Institute.</p>
<p>I.E. Objective: Support efforts to ensure normalcy for children and youth in the foster care system.</p>	
<p><i>I.E.1. Strategy: Collaborate with stakeholders and provide support to promote and expand access to normalcy activities for children and youth.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (P. L. 113–183) was signed into law in September 2014. This Federal law includes the reasonable and prudent parent standard, which allows foster parents and caregivers greater discretion in making decisions regarding the typical daily activities of the children and youth in their care and is intended to normalize a child or youth’s experiences as much as possible while maintaining their health, safety, and best interests. Helping children and youth in foster care have normal routine experiences is critically important for their</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission will deliver timely and relevant information and training to Texas judges and attorneys about normalcy activities and duties. The Children’s Commission will explore the possibility of sponsoring or organizing efforts to support normalcy activities for youth in foster care. Also, the CC will examine the feasibility of developing a Guide to ensuring normalcy.</p> <p>The Capacity Building Center for States recently developed a guide entitled, <u>Having the Normalcy Conversation: A Guide for Discussing Developmentally Appropriate</u></p>

healthy social, emotional, and cognitive development, overall well-being, and successful transition into adulthood.

[Services for Children, Youth, and Young Adults in Foster Care](https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/youth-development/normalcy-conversation/) which is available online at: <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/youth-development/normalcy-conversation/>.

<p>Goal II: Promote, expand, and share best and promising child welfare and court practices and resources to improve judicial administration and strengthen the child welfare system.</p>	
<p>II.A. Objective: Create opportunities to bring together subject matter experts, judicial and executive branch leaders, and key policy makers so that important and urgent issues are examined and recommendations and solutions are identified.</p>	
<p><i>II.A.1. Strategy: Work with DFPS and other stakeholders to identify topics for Round Table discussions.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>Round Table discussions are designed to address key, urgent issues affecting the Texas child welfare system through a half-day program that is facilitated by a subject-matter and legal expert. The topics vary year to year and the number of Round Tables hosted each year also varies according to the interest of stakeholders and issues demanding attention. The Children’s Commission’s role usually consists of forming a small workgroup to discuss the overall purpose, create an invitation and distribution list, secure a venue, handle all invitations, RSVPs, and travel reimbursements, and produce a written report or paper within about 4 to 6 months following the event.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>There are no Round Table discussions scheduled at this time.</p>
<p>II.B. Objective: Ensure availability of quality judicial resources such as the Bench Book, Jurist in Residence (JIR) support and JIR correspondence and communicate to ensure judges are equipped to make informed, educated decisions, and use best practices in conducting hearings that will contribute to better outcomes for children and families.</p>	
<p><i>II.B.1. Strategy: Maintain, update, and support a high-quality Child Protection Law Bench Book for CPS Judges (Bench Book).</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission maintains a Bench Book that outlines the state and federal statutory requirements for judges handling child protection cases, including topical sections and checklists. The Bench Book also includes tips and best and promising practices. It is updated annually with new information, as needed, and is disseminate at training events and upon request. The Bench Book is also hosted on the Children’s</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The Texas Child Protection Law Bench Book is undergoing updates and is scheduled for publication in November 2018. The new version will be distributed at the 2018 Child Welfare Judges Conference being held on November 12-14, 2018. The Bench Book will also be distributed at the 2019 College for New Judges and will be hosted by LawBox online services for fiscal year 2018-2019 and available on the CC’s website.</p>

<p>Commission website and through LawBox, which can both be accessed through the website.</p>	<p>New content this year includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updates to all topical chapters 2. A new chapter on Contempt 3. A new bench card on addressing disproportionality 4. A new chapter on the importance of youth voice in court 5. New charts related to the Burden of Proof required throughout the stages of a CPS case 6. A new bench card on when courts and the Department are required to consider the best interest of the child. <p>The current version of the CC's Bench Book is maintained online here: http://benchbook.texaschildrenscommission.gov/</p>
<p><i>II.B.2. Strategy: Provide JIR support to the judiciary and the legal and child welfare systems.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Jurist in Residence (JIR) position was created to foster judicial leadership and promote greater expertise among child protection judges. The JIR develops relationships with retired and sitting judges, acts as a consultant, trainer, and speaker to provide expert and seasoned judicial advice on matters affecting courts and legal system handling of child welfare cases and issues, and publishes informational letters and “blasts” concerning items of interests, such as changes in policy, law, practice, and training events.</p> <p>Additionally, the JIR assists with the development of curriculum for the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference, moderates and presents, as needed, reviews updates to the Child Protection Law Bench Book, and attends and participates in events on behalf of the CC, including Round Tables and Trial Skills Trainings.</p>	<p><u>09/28/18:</u></p> <p><u>The Supreme Court has named Judge Rob Hofmann as Jurist in Residence. Judge Hofmann will join Judge Dean Rucker in assisting with execution of the Commission’s strategies for FY2019.</u></p> <p><u>The JIR activities will remain much the same for FY2019, with additional emphasis on elevating judicial leaders with particular expertise and interests related to child and family well-being and improving the child welfare system, as well as serving as a resource for the Texas Legislature during the upcoming 86th Legislative Session. Below is a list of the JIR Letters and Announcements issued between May 2018 and September 2018:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>9/12/18</u> <u>2018 Study of Legal Representation in Child Protective Services Cases</u> • <u>9/7/18</u> <u>Reminder: Upcoming MCLE and Related Discounts for CPS-Related MCLE</u> • <u>8/31/18</u> <u>Announcing Live CPS-Related MCLE on Tuesday, September 11, 2018</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8/24/18 Back to School Reminders for 2018 - 2019 • 8/17/18 Announcing Upcoming Live MCLE on CPS-Related Issues Save the Date: September 11, 2018 • 8/1/18 The Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Program • 7/19/18 Save the Date: 2018 Child Welfare Judges Conference • 7/13/18 Upcoming Webinar on July 18th: Kinship Care and Race Equity in Child Welfare • 6/13/18 DFPS "3 in 30" Program Information and Implementation Schedule • 5/24/18 Video Conferencing to Increase Family and Youth Engagement • 5/17/18 Attorney and Judicial Scholarship Deadlines Extended • 5/9/18 Resources Related to Cultural Competency and Reducing Disproportionality and Disparities • 5/3/18 Scholarship Deadlines; TBLS Child Welfare Application Extension; TBLS Exam Fee Reimbursement; and DFPS Region 1 Community Meeting
<p>II.C. Objective: Ensure availability of high-quality attorney resources such as Attorney Resource Letters, an attorney webpage on the CC website, and other relevant events to improve court-related outcomes for children and parents through legal representation that is trained and informed.</p>	
<p><i>II.C.1. Strategy: Develop and distribute Attorney Resource Letters (ARLs) that communicate or announce changes in law, policy, or practice and inform attorneys of training and other events.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>In May 2016, the CC created a distribution list of more than 3,000 attorneys to inform legal practitioners of training and scholarship opportunities and to relay information about issues related to child welfare. The Children’s Commission publishes attorney resource letters about emerging, pertinent, and changing policy, laws, practice, and training opportunities that are of interest to attorneys handling CPS cases. All ARLs are posted on the Children’s Commission’s website.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The CC’s distribution list has grown to more than 3700 attorneys, judges, court staff, and stakeholders. The Children’s Commission switched the method of communication to Constant Contact in late FY2018. Letters and Announcements issued between May 2018 and September 2018 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9/12/18 2018 Study of Legal Representation in Child Protective Services Cases • 9/7/18 Reminder: Upcoming MCLE and Related Discounts for CPS-Related MCLE

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8/31/18 Upcoming Live CPS-Related MCLE on Tuesday, September 11, 2018 • 8/24/18 Back to School Reminders for 2018 - 2019 • 8/17/18 Announcing Upcoming Live MCLE on CPS-Related Issues Save the Date: September 11, 2018 • 8/1/18 The Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Program • 7/13/18 Upcoming Webinar on July 18th: Kinship Care and Race Equity in Child Welfare • 6/13/18 DFPS "3 in 30" Program Information and Implementation Schedule • 5/24/18 Video Conferencing to Increase Family and Youth Engagement • 5/17/18 Attorney and Judicial Scholarship Deadlines Extended • 5/9/18 Resources Related to Cultural Competency and Reducing Disproportionality and Disparities • 5/3/18 Scholarship Deadlines; TBLS Child Welfare Application Extension; TBLS Exam Fee Reimbursement; and DFPS Region 1 Community Meeting <p>To subscribe to receive the Commission’s communications and letters, please sign up on the website at http://bit.ly/2MLTTvI.</p>
--	---

II.D. Objective: Maintain and enhance the Children’s Commission website to provide an easily accessible, user-friendly resources for the judiciary, attorneys, and the child welfare community to obtain information and best practices in their interactions with children and families.

<i>II.D.1. Strategy: Maintain and enhance usability and function of the Children’s Commission website.</i>	Progress Report
--	------------------------

<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission maintains a website that features published reports, guides, announcements, and training opportunities. CIP grant applications and grant recipient information is also included on the website. The website links to a Twitter account, @TXChildrensComm through which JIR and ARL communiques are shared once they are published. Subscribers to the Attorney Resource Letter distribution list has increased dramatically and is now at over 3700 subscribers.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The CC updates the website on a regular basis and provides a specific portal / webpage for judges and attorneys as well as one for visitors to submit inquiries or sign up for CC mailing lists and notification features.</p>
--	---

II.E. Objective: Support county, state, and national child welfare leaders and organizations to enhance knowledge and competency and share experience and expertise with and throughout Texas.	
<i>II.E.1. Strategy: Provide assistance to and collaborate with local jurisdictions, DFPS, and state and national partners and organizations.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission provides various types of support for child welfare partners and stakeholders including meeting facilitation and support, travel reimbursement for meeting and training event attendees, presentations by CC staff as requested, and assistance securing speakers for local, regional, or national events, as appropriate.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission has budgeted funds to support county, state, and national organization and efforts as described. There are no requests for such funds pending at this time.</p>
II.F. Objective: Support the use of best practices in court case management	
<i>II.F.1. Strategy: Evaluate the quality, impact and usability of the Office of Court (OCA) Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS).</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>CPCMS is a case management system that is unique to Child Protection Courts (CPC). It has been in use since 2009. OCA staffs a CPCMS Advisory Council of CPC judges, OCA staff and Children’s Commission staff to identify and discuss various enhancements and issues. CPCMS is in its ninth year of service and is currently in maintenance mode. User-generated problems and enhancements are routed through an Advisory Council, which also advises on data collection and reporting features of CPCMS.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission staff serves on the Advisory Committee and collaborates with OCA regularly on the status of CPCMS’ functioning, problems, and enhancements.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>In FY2019, OCA will conduct two governance meetings to establish priorities for CPCMS enhancements, report the status of governance activities to the Children’s Commission, and will provide at least four software releases during the grant period.</p> <p>OCA will also ensure that CPCMS reporting functions are operational and will collaborate on data reports that can be produced by CPCMS and then reviewed and shared with CPC Judges as well as other stakeholders.</p>
<i>II.F.2. Strategy: Partner with Office of Court Administration to expand support and training for Child Protection Court program, judges and support staff.</i>	Progress Report
Background:	09/28/18:

<p>Child Protection Courts also known as specialty child protection courts in Texas were created to assist trial courts in the rural areas in managing their child abuse and neglect dockets. Like the child support court associate judges, these associate judges are appointed by the presiding judges and are OCA employees. At the discretion of the presiding judge, visiting judges are sometimes appointed to hear these cases instead of associate judges.</p> <p>The judges assigned to these dockets hear child abuse and neglect cases exclusively. Therefore, children can achieve permanency more quickly and the quality of placement decisions should be higher. The 24 child protection courts operate in 130 counties.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission provides funding to support CPCMS as well as other goods and services required by CPC judges and coordinators to conduct hearings and manage cases.</p>	<p>OCA staff developed a four-hour training that will be delivered as part of the 2018 Child Welfare Judges Conference in November. The half-day program includes an update on the House Bill 7 Task Force which spent FY2018 examining issues related to broad form jury submission, Notice of Appeal and the associated trial court record, and the Anders procedure in CPS cases. The curriculum will include a legislative preview and court security update as well as CPC and CPCMS IT updates.</p> <p>Also, the Children’s Commission provided \$26K in Visiting Judge funds to OCA for use between May 2018 and September 2018. Funds not expended in FY2018 will be extended for use in FY2019.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission will work with OCA in FY2019 to convene a meeting of the CPC judges separate from the CWJC pre-conference meeting on November 12, 2018.</p>
<p><i>II.F.3. Strategy: Collaborate with and provide support for specialty courts, dockets or programs.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The National Quality Improvement Center for Collaborative Community Court Teams (QIC-CCCT) has provided a grant to Harris County to focus on the implementation of the CARA amendments to CAPTA. The intent of the grant is to better address the needs of infants and toddlers and their family members who are impacted by substance abuse disorders. Harris County Infant and Toddler Court received a \$70,000 grant award in April 2017. The Children’s Commission has agreed to engage with the CCCT to share information about trends, needs and service gaps identified by the CCCT as those elements relate to infants to toddlers with prenatal exposure and their parents affected by substance use disorders. 2. The Children’s Commission also agreed to provide funding through OCA to employ an Associate Judge and Court Coordinator to assist in handling child abuse and neglect cases filed in Dallas County Family Courts to promote achieving permanency for children in the Permanent Managing Conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services. The PMC Court will handle PMC cases using best 	<p>09/28/18:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The QIC-CCCT is holding monthly stakeholder conference calls which CIP staff attends. 2. The Children’s Commission provided over \$185,000 of General Revenue funds to OCA to launch the Dallas PMC Court. The Court will come on line in FY2019.

<p>practices modeled after the Harris County PMC Project Court, and will use OCA’s Child Protection Case Management System to manage the cases.</p>	
<p><i>II.F.4. Strategy: Convene a Task Force to examine the issues related to youth involved both in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission has worked since its inception to strengthen courts for children and families in the Texas child protection system. Federal Court Improvement funds require a focus on children who are abused and neglected but children involved in the juvenile justice system present with many of the same challenges and needs. The Texas Judicial Council recommended to the Supreme Court in July that the Children’s Commission should convene a task force to study and report on issues relating to youth with involvement in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. The task force should establish a common, statewide definition(s) for the population, identify resources needed to meet the needs of youth who are dually-involved, and make other recommendations as may be necessary to improve outcomes for dually-involved youth. The report should address training needs for judges and other necessary parties on handling cases involving youth involved in both systems.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>In July 2018, the Texas Judicial Council adopted a recommendation related to the formation of a Dual Status Task Force. In October 2018, the Children’s Commission will begin discussing Task Force composition, including outreach to judges and other stakeholders about serving on and chairing the Task Force. In November, the CC will attend a meeting in Harris County to discuss efforts already in place in Harris as well as other counties through the Georgetown University Crossover Youth Practice Model program.</p>

Goal III: Facilitate and institutionalize collaboration, communication, and respect between the judicial system and child welfare partners.	
III.A. Objective: Participate in and promote institutional collaboration among high-level state and judicial leaders, as well as among multi-disciplinary child welfare stakeholders to ensure open and continuous dialogue between and among the various child welfare partners aimed at improving the child welfare system functionality, promoting equitable services, and ensuring justice for all parties.	
<i>III.A.1. Strategy: Participate in and provide a forum and opportunity for child welfare stakeholders to collaborate, communicate, and share information about child welfare practices, policies, needs, and strengths.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission helps institutionalize collaboration by maintaining a statewide multidisciplinary judicial commission, holding regular meetings that include child welfare stakeholders, partnering with the state child welfare agency, and other state and national level executives, partners, and organizations.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission also maintains a Collaborative Council of child welfare advocates, stakeholders, and state agencies to promote collaboration in development and implementation of CIP initiatives and conducts regular collaborative calls and meetings involving a variety of stakeholders and participants.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission participates on workgroups and collaboratives of various organizations to ensure the Commission is integrally involved in efforts and decisions affecting the state’s child welfare system, and shares information through its website, judge and attorney distribution lists, and commission meetings and commission-sponsored events.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission also serves as a convener to facilitate substantive discussions related to child welfare matters, produces related reports with recommended changes to judicial, attorney, child welfare, and advocate practice, as well as state policy and statute.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The CC held Commission meetings on February 9, 2018 and May 4, 2018, hosting 66 and 80 members and guests, respectively. At the February 9th meeting, the Children’s Commission provided the Collaborative Council with requested information regarding its role and responsibilities. In May, the CC staff distributed a draft Collaborative Council Directory, which was finalized in August and is scheduled for distribution at the September 28, 2018 meeting.</p> <p>CC Staff will continue to participate on various boards, workgroups, and committees, including but not limited to the Public-Private Partnership for Community Based Care, Education Reach for Texans, Texas Board of Legal Specialization Exam Committee, the TBLS Board of Directors, and the Family Justice Initiative.</p> <p>The CC will also continue its partnership with stakeholder and advocacy groups, including but not limited to the Judicial Commission on Mental Health, Texas Juvenile Justice Department, the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, The University of Texas School of Social Work, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, and the Child Protection Reform Round Table.</p> <p>Pursuant to other strategies outlined in this report, the Commission will convene meetings as requested, manage projects, produce reports, and make appropriate recommendations related to judicial policy and practice.</p>

III.B. Confer regularly with the Department of Family and Protective Services on the Child and Family Service Reviews, Program Improvement Plans, Child and Family State Plans, and the Court Improvement Program Strategic Plans.	
<i>III.B.1. Strategy: Confer with DFPS on federal plans, audits and requirements as mandated by federal program instructions.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>Federal Law mandates that states receiving Title IV-E funds must collaborate with the state’s Court Improvement Program (CIP). The Children’s Commission administer the CIP for Texas. As such, the Children’s Commission is required to collaborate and partner closely with the Department of Family and Protective Services. Specifically, the entities are required to collaborate on the State’s five-year Child and Family State Plan(CFSP), periodic Child and Family Service Reviews and ensuing Program Improvement Plans (PIP), and the annual Court Improvement Program Strategic Plan and Self-Assessment. The CC ED and CC Staff serve on and advise the State PIP Team.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The Executive and Assistant Directors of the Children’s Commission regularly confer with DFPS to discuss certain elements of the CFSP and PIP.</p> <p>Specific areas of collaboration for FY2019 will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Commission’s annual judicial conference by joining regional directors and judges to discuss data, gaps, and processes. DFPS will provide aggregate data to help identify gaps, trends, and process changes. • Collaboration on improving notice and engagement of parties beyond the CPC Courts and the CPCMS system. • Collaboration on Round Table discussions on system and specialized topics. • Consideration of legal and judicial input regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working with court stakeholders to ensure effective and appropriate use of court involvement in cases with court-ordered services; ○ Determining barriers and possible strategies to strengthen DFPS policy and practice related to incarcerated parents; ○ Sharing practice guidance regarding how to best engage and support parent victims of family violence; ○ Consulting with attorneys who represent parents to determine barriers and strategies to strengthen DFPS policy and practice related to Family Group Decision-Making; ○ Polling judges (through CC process) about the challenges and suggestions for improvements to enhance and speed permanency in cases involving the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (the ICPC);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sharing information about Collaborative Family Engagement and any evaluations and next steps related to expanding CFE. <p>DFPS leadership has a standing position on the Children’s Commission. At least one state-level DFPS staff member is on every CC committee. DFPS participates in a bi-weekly collaborative conference call with child-welfare stakeholders, including executive staff of DFPS, OCA, CASA, the Children’s Commission’s Collaborative Council, and other child welfare stakeholders. DFPS members have the opportunity to present at each CC meeting to provide information regarding DFPS initiatives and efforts. DFPS and CIP jointly attend the CIP Annual Conferences. DFPS state and regional leadership attends the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference.</p>
Goal IV: Promote high quality court proceedings that safeguard due process, ensure child and family involvement, and support effective legal representation of parties.	
IV.A. Objective: Improve legal representation so that parents, children, and the State of Texas experience high-quality court hearings.	
<i>IV.A.1 Strategy: Convene and maintain a Legal Representation Committee to support efforts to ensure high quality legal representation for parties.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>When a family is involved in a child protection proceeding, quality legal counsel is absolutely essential for all parties to ensure that the court strikes the appropriate balance between the rights and duties of all parties involved.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission has maintained a Legal Representation Committee (LRC) since its inception. The Committee exists to identify training needs, advise child welfare system stakeholders on best legal and judicial system practices, evaluate proposed statutory amendments, assess the quality of legal representation throughout the state, and help ensure that court proceedings guard due process, promote child and family engagement, and produce quality legal representation outcomes for the children and families involved.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The LRC met on July 30, 2018 and reviewed a preliminary draft of the report on the Commission’s 2018 Study of Legal Representation. The draft summarized and organized the results from 3400 stakeholders who participated in surveys about legal representation conducted in the Spring of 2018. LRC members provided valuable feedback and insight and many LRC recommendations were incorporated into the final report. On September 6, the Children’s Commission sent the finished report on the 2018 Study of Legal Representation in Child Protective Services Cases to the Texas Legislature and on September 12, the report was published on the Commission’s website. The Commission staff shared the report with Commissioners, Collaborative Council, Legal Representation Committee, and its JIR and ARL d-lists on Wednesday, September 12, 2018.</p>

	<p>The report is available at:</p> <p><u>Supreme Court of Texas Children’s Commission 2018 Study of Legal Representation in Child Protective Services Cases</u></p> <p>The final report recommends that the Supreme Court or the Texas Legislature convene a Task Force on Court-Appointed Legal Representation to determine how Texas can thoughtfully design systemic improvements. The report suggests that the Task Force on Court-Appointed Legal Representation be charged with making specific recommendations regarding the creation, implementation, and evaluation of a high-functioning, high-quality legal representation system with the necessary and appropriate oversight and accountability. Further recommendations include that any legal representation system or model should include powers, duties, access to information, policy, legislative, and practice changes necessary to establishing appropriate oversight and accountability.</p> <p>The next meeting of the LRC will be November 2, 2018.</p>
<p>IV.B. Objective: Develop, adopt and promote standards of practice for attorneys representing parties in child protection cases so that attorneys are encouraged to gain a higher level of expertise and provide high-quality legal representation.</p>	
<p><i>IV.B.1. Strategy: Support development and adoption of Standards of Representation for Attorneys representing children and parents in Child Protection cases.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>Though attorneys for parents and children are required by the Family Code to become familiar with the ABA standards of practice for attorneys who represent parents and children in abuse and neglect cases. Texas does not require compliance with the ABA standards as a condition of appointment, nor has Texas adopted its own standards of practice for court-appointed attorneys.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The 2018 Legal Representation Study surveyed stakeholders regarding the effect that the lack of enforceable standards of practice has on the legal representation of parents and children. Across stakeholder groups, participants demonstrated a high level of confidence that the creation and enforcement of standards would improve the quality of representation, including 70% of responding court-appointed attorneys indicating that standards would have a positive effect.</p>
<p>IV.C. Objective: Encourage attorneys who wish to achieve a higher level of understanding and expertise to pursue child welfare specialization through the Texas Board of Legal Specialization to provide a higher caliber of legal representation.</p>	

<p><i>IV.C.1. Strategy: Participate on the Texas Board of Legal Specialization Advisory and Exam Committees and Provide Support for Specialization.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>On February 14, 2017 the Texas Supreme Court officially recognized Child Welfare Law as the 20th area of certified legal specialization. Judge Dean Rucker serves as the chair of the Advisory Commission which considers applications to become board certified in child welfare law and has the authority to review and suggest changes in standards. CC staff serve as the chair of Exam Commission, which has written the exam and will grade each exam.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>As of September 1, 2018, the TBLS received over 65 applications for board certification in child welfare law. Fourteen applicants meet the criteria to become certified without taking the exam and 51 applicants are scheduled to sit for the inaugural exam, which will be held on October 15, 2018 in Austin. The Exam Commission held several call-in meetings in August and September of 2017 to certify the Child Welfare Law Exam specifications and to make final adjustments to exam questions. The Exam Commission will hold its last pre-exam call-in on September 26th and the exam will be finalized October 1st.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission will partner with TBLS to provide scholarships to cover application and exam fees in FY2019 for applicants who successfully pass the exam.</p>
<p><i>IV.C.2. Strategy: Reimburse exam and recertification fees for attorneys and judges who pass the NACC CWLS exam or qualify for recertification.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission offers reimbursement of either the CWLS Application Fee or the Certification Exam Fee for Texas attorneys and judges who successfully qualify for and pass the Child Welfare Specialist Exam. The scholarship includes the NACC Red Book Training to help applicants prepare for the exam, a copy of the Red Book to each applicant, offering and scoring the exam, and reimbursing successful applicants either the \$350 exam fee or the \$300 application fee.</p> <p>Additionally, assistance is available to Texas attorneys and judges who are seeking recertification of their CWLS every five years, which is reimbursed at \$180. As of June 2017, the program is open in 43 states and there are over 600 CWLS across the country. Texas is currently in the top five states for number of certified attorneys/judges.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>In FY2018, there were seven Texas attorneys eligible for recertification and 20 attorney applicants eligible to sit for the NACC’s CWLS exam. Five Texas attorneys took advantage of the recertification scholarship in 2018. No new attorneys were certified, but NACC did receive three new applications during 2018. There are 10 attorneys who have been approved by the exam committee and are preparing to sit for the exam and become certified.</p> <p>With the Commission offering Red Book training courses in FY2019, NACC estimates there will be 29 Texas attorneys/judges who will seek CWLS certification. There are also seven Texas attorneys whose recertification will be due in FY2019.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission will continue to contract with NACC to provide reimbursement and NACC will provide information and feedback it receives or solicits</p>

	about the quality, subject matter, and process of administering the exam. NACC will also share information about the passage rate for Texas applicants.
IV.D. Objective: Create, distribute, maintain, support, and evaluate resources for parents involved in CPS cases so that parents can gain more equal footing and support for their rights once they become involved with CPS.	
<i>IV.D.1. Strategy: Support Family Helpline and Parent Resource Guide.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>In FY2017, the CC partnered with Access to Justice and the Children’s Justice Act to fund the Texas Legal Services Corporation to establish the Family Helpline, which provides easy, statewide access for parents and family members to basic information, education, and resources addressing parental rights as they relate to CPS Investigations, the provision of Family Based Services, Parental Child Safety Placements, Chapter 34 non-parent agreements, termination of parental rights, custody, access, visitation, service plans, the court’s role in conducting hearings and oversight, right to legal counsel, non-offending parents, minor parents, incarcerated parents, survivors of family violence, intergenerational issues, and other variations.</p> <p>Prior to establishing the Family Helpline, the Children’s Commission partnered with the University of Texas and other stakeholders to produce the Parent Resource Guide, which is available in print and online on the CC website as well as many on other CC partner and advocate websites, in English and Spanish.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The Family Helpline has provided assistance to over 2400 individual callers facing child welfare legal issues across the state of Texas so far in FY 2018. Helpline staff attorneys have spoken with callers from 164 different counties in Texas, which is 65% of the 254 counties in our state. The calls affected 2,089 adults, 3,354 children, and covered questions regarding 119 different issues related to CPS.</p> <p>In addition to its regular staff of two full-time and three part-time attorneys, the Helpline has brought in a temporary attorney to oversee the compiling of a master list of each Texas county’s local process of obtaining a court-appointed attorney in CPS cases, including obtaining a copy of each county’s required affidavit of indigence. The master list will be transformed into a guide used by all Helpline attorneys to inform callers of their local process regarding attorney appointments for parents who have had a child legally removed from their care. The Helpline is also working on creating an in-depth legal manual regarding FBSS and CPS investigations with the assistance of a temporary law clerk. Additionally, the Family Helpline has also taken over editorial responsibilities for the Children’s Commission’s Parent Resource Guide and has submitted its first set of revisions to the Children’s Commission.</p> <p>For FY 2019, the Family Helpline will be working with the Texas Access to Justice Internship Program to develop a project evaluating repeat-caller data and has applied with the Equal Justice Works Fellowship to develop a two-year pilot project providing legal representation to parents in FBSS cases. The Helpline is also developing a new outreach and marketing campaign that will be introduced in the first quarter of 2019. The campaign will target rural and underserved areas of the state as well as refreshing</p>

	the look of current Helpline materials and creating additional educational materials to share in person, online, and through social media.
IV.E. Objective: Improve and expand engagement of families and caregivers in court hearings so that court hearings are higher quality and more meaningful for the families and children involved.	
<i>IV.E.1. Strategy: Promote and improve availability and use of the OCA Notice and Engagement tool.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>The project involves using non-confidential case data to provide email notice to users about upcoming hearings. All parties involved in CPS cases continue to struggle with securing consistent and timely notice of scheduled hearings from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). This issue includes the foster placements and DFPS service provider facilities where the children/youth are in placement and results in many parties not being able to attend scheduled court hearings. OCA will market the resource and periodically re-issue announcements, survey users on the usefulness and effectiveness of the system, and monitor the system login and search information. Notices will be monitored to evaluate whether the correct hearing data is populating according to search criteria, and reports/data will be produced and provided to the CC.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>In FY2018, OCA created an application programming interface (API) that will allow Courts other than those using CPCMS to upload their hearing data into the system. The ultimate goal is to expand the hearing notification tool to all courts hearing child protection cases to provide parties with up-to-date hearing information and to provide courts with an alternate means of notification free of charge.</p> <p>The OCA and Commission staff met with Judge Darlene Byrne of Travis County to pilot the new feature. During the meeting, concerns about confidentiality were voiced. The OCA will continue to work with Travis County to address these concerns and to work toward implementing the API in FY2019. The Commission will continue searching for additional courts to pilot the project.</p> <p>Texas CASA distributed information and promoted the Notice and Engagement hearing notification system at its Executive and Program Director retreat in May of 2018.</p> <p>In FY2018, the number of Notice and Engagement system users increased by 351, bringing the total to 1,071 registered users. The Commission and OCA continue to advertise the availability of the Notice and Engagement tool.</p>
IV.F. Objective: Promote the value of mediation in CPS cases, which may, in turn, help children and families exit the child welfare system more quickly.	

<p><i>IV.F.1. Strategy: Establish an understanding and framework regarding availability, quality, support, cost, training, and usefulness of mediation in CPS cases.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>Mediation is used in CPS cases throughout Texas and can be an effective and financially prudent method of resolving cases. One benefit of mediation is that it can enhance peoples’ sense they were treated fairly. Studies show that an enhanced sense of fair treatment increases both acceptance and compliance with court decisions. Though the use of mediation to resolve CPS cases prior to trial has become widely accepted, the CC is interested in exploring whether mediation is being underutilized in CPS cases because it often occurs too late for the benefits of increased compliance to be realized.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The CC plans to explore the formation a Mediation Workgroup to examine the benefits of expanding the use of mediation in CPS cases. The goals of the workgroup would be to review research on the efficacy of mediation, create projects to enhance the use of mediation in CPS cases, bring in research partners to help define goals, methods, and logistics of the projects, and explore the feasibility of pilot projects with interested jurisdictions. Projects could apply to the FBSS, COS, or TMC stage of a case and could be combined with existing pilots examining other aspects of the CPS system.</p>
<p>IV.G. Objective: Improve and expand engagement of youth in court hearings and related decision-making so that youth feel more involved and assured that their voice is heard and important to the decisions being made about their lives.</p>	
<p><i>IV.G.1. Strategy: Elevate the importance of youth voice, youth presence, and youth input in the outcome of their case.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>In FY2018, the Children’s Commission voted to fund a \$50,000 grant to Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) to support its 2018 Annual Conference and help establish a Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) designed to elevate and incorporate youth voice in statewide policy and administrative procedure discussions, particularly in the area of the foster care system. The YALC will provide a long-term opportunity for those youth to actively use their voices to change policy and influence the development and provision of services. The council will also provide a forum for stakeholders to learn from the perspectives of young people.</p> <p>To support youth engagement, the CC will also do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasize the importance of youth voice and youth presence in court. - Provide training about the importance of youth voice. - Include youth currently and formerly in care as part of judicial training events. 	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The TNOYS conference was held on June 6-8, 2018 and provided a platform for youth to share their lived experience and perspectives on policies and services. It also offered training for organizations on how to identify opportunities to include youth voice into their work. TNOYS also hosted discussions about the establishment of a Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) and held multiple conference calls and a planning retreat for its members. The YALC holds conference calls from 5:00 pm- 6:00 pm every last Thursday of every other month.</p>

<p>- Promote bench cards and other resources and tools that judges can use to appropriately involve youth in court hearings and permanency planning.</p>	
<p><i>IV.G.2. Strategy: Promote and improve the availability and use of the Video Conferencing (VC) hosted and maintained by the Office of Court Administration (OCA).</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The video conferencing project enables children involved in child abuse and neglect cases to participate in permanency and placement review hearings without being physically present in the courtroom. The CC provides funding to OCA via a grant to host and support the hardware and software required to facilitate video conferencing between courts and residential placements (primarily Residential Treatment Centers). OCA maintains a list of Residential Treatment Centers with video conferencing capability as well as a list of video-enabled courts. OCA maintains a log of all hearings conducted, including the date, time, participating court, type of hearing, participating placement, length of hearing, and any problems with the transmission quality, or technical difficulties. In FY2019, the CC will work with OCA and others to expand capability and feasibility for use beyond court hearing.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>In FY2018, the long time OCA project manager for this program, Tim Kennedy, retired. OCA assigned Charlotte Velasco as the new manager of the video conferencing project.</p> <p>FY2018 totals for video-enabled courts, placement facilities, and CASA offices increased by 47 sites; however, the number of video hearings conducted decreased 25% from FY2017. Contributing factors to this deficit include Hurricane Harvey's impact on court systems in Houston and San Antonio (both regular users of the video conferencing system), the promotion of the system to local CASA offices who have registered but not yet used the system, and the need for additional training for newly registered users.</p> <p>To increase use of the system for FY2019, the OCA and Commission plan to survey users on system satisfaction and usability. Based on survey results, the OCA and Commission will work to make identified changes and to create a user manual.</p>

Goal V: Collect and analyze court and child welfare-related data to develop solutions to improve outcomes, quality, and sustainability of Children’s Commission strategies.	
V.A. Objective: Use child welfare agency, court system and/or other data to improve permanency outcomes for children and youth in foster care.	
<i>V.A.1. Strategy: Hire Data Analyst to assist both the Children’s Commission and the JCMH with data projects to benefit the State of Texas.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>Starting in FY2017, CIP programs were instructed to become familiar and make use of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data. The Children’s Commission also is in need of identifying, obtaining, and understanding court-related data, gaining a better understanding of the data available from the DFPS Data Portal, as well as understanding and accessing data collected by other child welfare partners and stakeholders. JCMH has similar needs I in their areas of focus.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The CC will develop and post a job description in order to hire a data analyst who can serve the needs of both the CC and the JCMH. The addition of a data analyst will ensure that the Children’s Commission and JCMH can continue to focus on continuous quality improvement (CQI) and use data to inform each Commission’s goals and strategies.</p>

Goal VI: Develop, support and fund high-quality, appropriate training for judges, attorneys, and child welfare partners.	
VI.A. Objective: Provide high-quality and easily accessible training resources for judges and attorneys.	
<i>VI.A.1. Strategy: Plan, fund, conduct, and evaluate judicial training conferences and events.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission collaborates with Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ) to design specialized judicial education and training opportunities for active, retired and former Texas appellate, district and county court at law judges, as well as associate judges and court personnel through its grant with the TCJ. Each year TCJ plans at least one annual Child Welfare Judges Conference.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission also provides partial funding for a half-day CPS track at TCJ’s annual Family Justice Conference.</p> <p>Additionally, the Children’s Commission usually plans and funds at least one multidisciplinary conference or summit during the fiscal year.</p> <p>Planning and funding activities include designing curriculum and agenda for conferences, determining the budget and number of attendees, participating in planning calls, vetting applicants, surveying participants, and evaluating the process and event for future planning.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>This year’s CWJC is scheduled for November 12-14, 2018 at the Sheraton Austin Georgetown Conference Center. The CC convened a Curriculum Committee comprised of judges from across the state, which met by conference call on May 16, 2018 and convened electronically thereafter as needed. The Curriculum Committee and CC staff developed an agenda based on specific judicial requests for further education on particular topics. Using both plenary and break-out sessions, the conference content will include secondary trauma; updates on the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care and the Judicial Commission on Mental Health; a panel on cultural competency; a CPS case law update; a presentation on the Legal Representation Study results; judicially-led topics on teen pregnancy and parenting in foster care, normalcy, and addressing human trafficking; updates from DFPS leadership followed by regional breakouts with DFPS Regional Directors; five topics for a “Shift and Share,” including children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, the Round Table Report on Education in Residential Settings, procedural fairness, domestic violence in CPS Cases, and how to talk with kids in chambers; along with a presentation on substance abuse and resources; and a panel to recognize judicial leadership.</p>
<i>VI.A.2. Strategy: Partner with organizations or independently produce attorney training content</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>In partnership with the State Bar, the CC makes several online courses available to court-appointed attorneys and state and DFPS attorneys. Also, once each year the CC works with SBOT to webcast a day-long, 6 MCLE hours’ worth of training for attorneys</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>SBOT One-Day webcast: On September 11, 2018, the CC partnered with the State Bar of Texas to produce a total of 6 hours of live webcasts on basic and advanced topics for attorneys providing legal representation in CPS cases. The webcast was hosted by</p>

who represent children, parents, and the state of Texas in CPS proceedings. The SBOT's online classroom of CPS-related webinars is available at a reduced rate to attorneys representing children and parents, and there are scholarships available through the Commission and through the Bar for attorneys who represent the State of Texas and need financial assistance to access this online training.

The Children's Commission collaborates with local sponsor/convener on the conference agenda, audience, budget, marketing, and evaluation; help ensure notice of the event to judges and attorneys; ensure the sponsor applies for CLE, if appropriate; analyzes survey results from evaluations distributed by the organizers; and conducts CQI of the process and training content.

Judge Piper McCraw, 469th District Court of Collin County and Chair of the Children's Commission's Training Committee.

- Webcast #1 was titled Navigating Concurrent Civil and Criminal CPS Cases.
- Webcast #2 was titled Understanding Common Evidentiary Issues in CPS Cases and included the topics of Authentication of Social Media, Drug Testing Issues, and Medical Diagnoses and Exhibits.
- Webcast #3 was titled Expanding Opportunities for Older Youth in CPS Cases and covered the topics of Sealing Juvenile Records, Youth Voice in Court, and Postsecondary Readiness and Success.

There were a total of 614 viewers for the days' worth of webcasts, which is the highest number to date for Commission webcasts hosted by TexasBar CLE. The Bar provided discounts to court-appointed attorneys and CASAs, and scholarships to other viewers, while the CC provided scholarships to attorneys representing the Department of Family and Protective Services. In general, the webcast audience included attorneys on the child protection docket across the state, along with judges, CASAs, and other stakeholders. All three webcasts will be archived before the end of September 2018 and will be available as webinars for viewing at the same rates in the TexasBar CLE's Online Library.

Online Library

A total of 17 webcasts have been archived in the CPS practice area of the Texas Bar CLE's Online Library, the vast majority of which were produced by the Children's Commission in partnership with the SBOT. The topics cover relevant and timely issues of interest to attorneys who work in the area of child welfare.

2019 webinar topics will be identified shortly and CC staff will reach out to the SBOT to determine a date for the next statewide MCLE on child welfare law topics.

DFPS Regional Attorney Training

The 2018 Regional Attorney Conference, which will include DFPS Legal Assistants, will be held on November 13-14, 2018 at T Bar M in New Braunfels. The pre-conference

	Trial Skills Training will be held on November 12, 2018. The agenda for the attorney conference includes sessions on jury selection strategies, child trafficking, and experts.
VI.A.3. Strategy: Host one Trial Skills Training (TST) events each fiscal year.	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>TST is an 18.50 MCLE hour, hands-on training designed to improve the litigation skills of child welfare law attorneys in order to raise the caliber of legal services to children and families in child protection cases. It includes a fictional CPS fact pattern, with a complete case file covering all Texas-specific statutory hearings building up to final trial. TST provides parent, child, and state attorneys litigation exercises in the CPS context, including lectures and demonstrations from trained faculty comprised of senior attorneys and judges, followed by personal critiques and coaching. Caseworkers, Pediatricians, and a Parent Therapist serve as live witnesses.</p> <p>Materials are updated and new faculty is recruited and trained with each event. Extensive internal and external CQI is involved with each event. The Children’s Justice Act covers the cost of participants who represent the state in CPS proceedings.</p> <p>To measure long-term effectiveness and impact, judicial evaluations of the TST graduates were developed.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The 9th TST was held over July 25-27, 2018 at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos. There were 63 applicants. The 21 selected trainees represented parents, children, or the state in CPS cases in the following counties: Harris, Chambers, Fort Bend, Williamson, Taylor, El Paso, Hidalgo, Orange, Travis, Cameron, Nueces, San Patricio, Sabine, Brazos, Jones, Shackelford, Dallas, McLennan, Gregg, Upsher, Comal, Hays, Galveston, and Denton.</p> <p>This TST featured pleadings and supportive documents which were updated to reflect changes emanating from the 2017 Legislative Session. Two new TST faculty were trained, bringing the total number of TST faculty to 19. Preliminary results from the post-event survey indicate that the vast majority of TST graduates would be able to apply their new knowledge to all of their CPS cases. Additionally, better case and client preparation and improved basic and advanced in-court trial skills and self-presentation were reported by participants.</p> <p>The student debrief indicated that more time to absorb the high volume of information would be helpful (suggesting that the training take four days instead of three) and that additional training on Voir Dire issues would be helpful as well.</p> <p>The faculty debrief indicated the need to update the fictional fact pattern which forms the basis of the case materials, and that faculty would benefit from additional training on how to give critiques in the students’ practice sessions.</p> <p>The next TST will be held in May 2019, at the same venue.</p>
VI.B. Objective: Ensure that attorneys and judges are educated and knowledgeable in order to employ best practices in providing legal representation and in conducting hearings.	

<p><i>VI.B.1. Strategy: Support attendance at state and national judicial and legal conferences and training events</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The CC administers different judge and attorney scholarship opportunities throughout the fiscal year, including but not limited to: (1) The bi-annual ABA Parent Attorney Conference and Children and the Law Conference held in Washington D.C.; (2) The State Bar of Texas (SBOT) Child Abuse and Neglect 1-Day Workshop; (3) the NACC Annual Conference; and (4) the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Annual Conference.</p> <p>For all scholarships, the CC determines scholarship criteria and deploys an application process that includes pre- and post-conference evaluations to identify or confirm the knowledge gained, new practices attendees plan to implement and/or a current practice they plan to change. The surveys also inquire about additional topics of interest to help inform planning for future conferences.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p><u>ABA</u></p> <p>The ABA Parent and Child Conferences are held every other year. The next set of ABA conferences will be held in April 2019. The Children’s Commission will offer travel and registration scholarships to attend to qualified attorneys.</p> <p><u>Advanced Family Law One-Day</u></p> <p>This year’s Child Abuse and Neglect Track 1-Day CLE was held live on August 15th during the Advanced Family Law Course by the new Child Protection Law Section. Three video replays of the CLE will follow in Dallas, Houston, and South Padre. The CC supported this CLE effort by providing scholarships to 59 attorneys. Preliminary post-event survey results from the live CLE presentation indicate that the presentations on ethical duties related to the representation of unknown fathers and the case law update were especially valuable to respondents.</p> <p><u>NACC Annual Conference</u></p> <p>The NACC Conference was held on August 23-25th in San Antonio, with a pre-conference on the 22nd for their in-person Red Book Training (which is helpful training on federal law related to child welfare, especially for those attorneys and judges wanting to take the NACC’s Child Welfare Law Specialist exam). The CC provided 76 total scholarships, which included 58 attorneys and judges as well as 9 scholarships to members of the CC Collaborative Council and 9 to CASAs. Of this total number, 35 attended the Red Book Training as well as the full conference. Preliminary post-event reviews indicate that many awardees planned to change a current practice or implement a new practice related to issues affecting older youth in care. The biggest concern from respondents was that there were many concurrent sessions and not enough opportunities to attend all of the sessions of interest. The Red Book Training received excellent reviews.</p>

	<p>NACC: Online CWLS Certification Exam Study Course</p> <p>NACC has developed an interactive, online study course covering the Child Welfare Law and Practice, 3rd Edition (also known as the Red Book), which is typically delivered in a one-day, intensive, in-person training session (such as the one described directly above). The Red Book Training and the CWLS exam cover federal law and related issues and is particularly helpful to those who are preparing for the CWLS Exam but are useful to all attorneys and judges who want to deepen their knowledge of CPS-related issues.. In September, the NACC will launch round two of its online Red Book training. The CC has purchased 30 online training slots and will make these available to qualified attorneys in the Spring of 2019 through a scholarship process.</p> <p>NCJFCJ</p> <p>The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Annual Conference was held in Denver, Colorado from July 22-25. The Commission provided scholarships to 20 judges.</p>
--	--

Goal VII: Reduce racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system.	
VII.A. Objective: Support efforts to address disproportionality and disparities in the Texas child welfare system so that children of color do not experience disparate effects and outcomes that prolong their stay in foster care.	
<p><i>VII.A.1. Strategy: Identify and Promote data-driven, cross-disciplinary training opportunities to address disproportionality and disparities among children and families involved in child protection cases.</i></p>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission is committed to the goal of reducing racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system through development and deployment of judicial and attorney resources aimed at increasing awareness, sharing</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission Bench Book includes a chapter and a bench card on this topic. The CC is also co-hosting and co-sponsoring the Judicial Mental Health Summit with the Judicial Commission on Mental Health. The Summit includes a session called</p>

<p>data and information, as well as best practices for dealing with disproportionality and disparities systemically and locally.</p>	<p>Ensuring Equity in Serving Children and Youth. Sheila Craig, a Commissioner and long-time member of the Children’s Commission’s Judicial Workgroup on Disproportionality will be the presenter.</p> <p>During the summer of 2018, the Commission promoted and attended a DFPS web series on disproportionality. Additionally, in FY2018 Commission staff attended multiple trainings on racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities.</p>
--	--

<p>Goal VIII: Recognize and respect tribal sovereignty, protect the best interests of Native American children and promote stability of Native American children and families.</p>	
<p>VIII.A. Objective: Establish, strengthen and support meaningful and respectful relationships with tribal nations and promote awareness, education, and application of the Indian Child Welfare Act so that Indian children and families experience equitable and respectful treatment in keeping with their customs and beliefs.</p>	
<p><i>VIII.A.1. Strategy: Continue the mutually respectful and ongoing relationships with Texas’ three federally recognized tribes and other tribal nations living in Texas.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission supports partnering with system stakeholders to promote ongoing knowledge and understanding of the ICWA and its importance. The CC also works with national ICWA and leading organizations on understanding and implementation of new Federal Rule and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Guidelines and membership on the Commission includes a tribal judge.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission also partners with DFPS in supporting tribal/state collaborative meetings and collaborates with the National Center for State Courts and the participants of the CIP ICWA Constituency Group.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>The monthly tribal/state collaborative calls have been suspended since May while the Commission works to reestablish connections with tribal leadership and discuss how the monthly calls can best assist tribes. CC staff participated in the CIP ICWA Constituency Group’s August and September meetings. CC staff also attended various state and national trainings on ICWA in FY2018.</p> <p>The Commission continues to promote knowledge and understanding of the updated ICWA Regulations and Guidelines. On September 21, CC staff presented an ICWA update at the Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas Symposium. The Commission plans to provide more training on ICWA in 2019.</p>

Goal IX: Oversee and administer the Court Improvement Program (CIP) funds to assess current and future needs of the courts, endeavor to increase funding available to the Children’s Commission and leverage funds with strategic and statewide partners.	
IX.A. Objective: Execute strategies of the Supreme Court Children’s Commission to help strengthen courts and the child welfare system to improve outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being.	
<i>IX.A.1. Strategy: Engage in activities integral to the Children’s Commission’s functions and operations.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission receives state appropriated as well as federal grant funds which are used to operate the Commission, fund meeting facilitation and travel reimbursement, training expenses and scholarships as well as pass-through grants to sub-grantees such as Texas Center for the Judiciary and Office of Court Administration.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission adopted its most recent Strategic Plan in 2016. The Children’s Commission also confers regularly with national organizations and other CIPs, submits annual reports and CIP strategic plans to the Administration of Children and Families and to the Supreme Court of Texas.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission holds Commission meetings every four months throughout each year of the five-year plan, and conducts a bi-monthly collaborative call with DFPS and other child welfare stakeholders as well as numerous other calls and meetings related to Children’s Commission workgroups. CC Staff serves on the Public Private Partnership, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Education Reach for Texans, and many other stakeholder workgroups and subcommittees formed under the leadership of its child welfare partners. The CC engages in ongoing participation with ACF and DFPS regarding the CFSP, APSR, CFSR and PIP and CIP Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>09/28/18:</p> <p>In FY2018, the CC received \$2 million in state appropriated funds for the 2018-2019 biennium. These funds are being combined with federal CIP funds, some of which are being passed through to grant recipients such as Texas CASA, Office of Court Administration, Texas Center for the Judiciary, and Texas Legal Services Corporation, as well as grants for training events to DFPS, State Bar of Texas, American Bar Association, National Association of Counsel for Children, and others.</p> <p>DFPS staff participate on the following workgroups and committees: Collaborative Council, Data Committee, Training Committee, Foster Care and Education, Special Education, Post-Secondary Education, School Discipline, House Bill 7 Task Force, Pleading Practice, Legal Representation, Parent Resource Workgroup, and in the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care.</p> <p>The CC publishes an updated Report to Commission in advance of each Commission meeting as well as JIR and ARL letters, project reports, meeting minutes, meeting agendas, and follow up reports for all short-term and long-term projects throughout the fiscal year.</p>

9/25/2018

INSERT - TAB 4

Supreme Court Children's Commission Meeting

Friday, September 28, 2018
9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.



Commission Goals I-IV



- Goal I. Encourage judicial leadership, accountability, and appropriate oversight of child protection cases to improve safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families.
- Goal II. Promote, expand, and share best and promising child welfare practices and resources to improve judicial administration and strengthen the child welfare system.
- Goal III. Facilitate and institutionalize collaboration, communication, and respect between the judicial system and child welfare partners.
- Goal IV. Promote high-quality court proceedings that safeguard due process, ensure child and family involvement, and support effective legal representation of parties.

Commission Goals V-IX



- Goal V. Collect and analyze court and child welfare–related data to develop solutions to improve outcomes, quality, and sustainability of Children’s Commission strategies.
- Goal VI. Develop, support, and fund high–quality, appropriate training for judges, attorneys, and child welfare partners.
- Goal VII. Reduce racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system.
- Goal VIII. Recognize and respect tribal sovereignty, protect the best interests of Native American children, and promote stability of Native American children and families.
- Goal IX. Oversee and administer the Court Improvement Program (CIP) funds to assess current and future needs of the courts, endeavor to increase funding available to the Children’s Commission, and leverage funds with strategic and statewide partners.

BASIC FOSTER CARE & EDUCATION TRAINING DATA/TECHNOLOGY



- **I.A.1** Collaborate with and support agency and partner efforts related to child safety.
- **I.B.1** Implement the Texas Blueprint. \$15,000 (workgroup meetings and travel, printed materials).
- **I.C.1** Partner with trauma and mental health advocates and agencies to implement and apply principles of Trauma Informed Care in the respective disciplines. \$15,000 (workgroup meetings and travel, printed materials).
- **I.D.1** Collaborate with state and local partners to prevent and address commercial sexual exploitation of youth in foster care.
- **I.E.1** Collaborate with stakeholders and provide support to promote and expand access to normalcy activities for children and youth. (planning stage).

- **II.A.1** Work with DFPS and other stakeholders to identify topics for Round Table discussions. \$5,000 (meeting and travel expenses).
- **II.B.1** Maintain, update, and support a high-quality Child Protection Law Bench Book for CPS Judges. \$15,000 (Law Box and reprints for Nov 2018).
- **II.B.2** Provide JIR support to the judiciary and the legal and child welfare systems. \$25,000.
- **II.C.1** Develop and distribute Attorney Resource Letters (ARLs) that communicate or announce changes in law, policy, or practice and inform attorneys of training and other events.
- **II.D.1** Maintain and enhance usability and function of the Children's Commission website.

- **II.E.1** Provide assistance to and collaborate with local jurisdictions, DFPS, and state and national partners and organizations. \$10,000.
- **II.F.1** Evaluate the quality, impact, and usability of the Office of Court Administration (OCA) Child Protection Case Management System. \$261,700 (also includes Video Conferencing, Notice and Engagement, Child Protection Court (CPC) Training).
- **II.F.2** Partner with OCA to expand support and training for CPC program, judges, and support staff. \$ incl in II.F.1.
- **II.F.3** Collaborate with and provide support for specialty courts, dockets, or programs. \$185,621 (Associate Judge and Coordinator).
- **II.F.4** Convene a Dual Status Task Force to examine the issues related to youth involved both in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. \$7,500 (workgroup meetings and travel).

- **III.A.1** Participate in and provide a forum and opportunity for child welfare stakeholders to collaborate, communicate, and share information about child welfare practices, policies, needs, and strengths.
- **III.B.1** Confer with DFPS on federal plans, audits, and requirements as mandated by federal program instructions.

- **IV.A.1** Convene and maintain a Legal Representation Committee to support efforts to ensure high-quality legal representation for parties. \$10,000 (workgroup meetings and travel).
- **IV.B.1** Support development and adoption of Standards of Representation for attorneys representing children and parents in child protection cases. \$ incl in IV.A.1 (workgroup meetings and travel).
- **IV.C.1** Participate on Texas Board of Legal Specialization Advisory and Exam Committees and provide support for specialization through exam fee reimbursement. \$10,000 (fee reimbursement).

- **IV.C.2** Reimburse exam and recertification fees for the NACC's CWLS Exam. \$2,500 (fee reimbursement).
- **IV.D.1** Support Family Helpline & Parent Resource Guide. \$195,543; \$5,000 (operate Helpline and update the PRG).
- **IV.E.1** Promote and improve availability and use of the OCA Notice and Engagement tool. \$ incl II.F.1.
- **IV.F.1** Study availability, quality, support, cost, training, and usefulness of mediation in CPS cases.
- **IV.G.1** Elevate importance of youth voice, youth presence, and youth input in case outcomes.
- **IV.G.2** Promote and improve the availability and use of video conferencing. \$ incl II.F.1.

- **V.A.1** Consider hiring a data analyst to assist both the Children's Commission and Judicial Commission on Mental Health. \$75,000 – \$100,000 range (salary and benefits).

- **VI.A.1** Plan, fund, conduct, and evaluate judicial training conferences and events (Child Welfare Judges Conference, Family Justice Conference, NCJFCJ Annual Conference, Implicit Bias, Education, Trauma/Mental Health or Other). \$353,546 (conference planning, associated venue expenses, and travel reimbursement).
- **VI.A.2** Partner with organizations or independently produce attorney training content (SBOT Webcast, DFPS Regional Attorney Training). \$12,500 (9/11/18 6 hour MCLE webcast, November 2018 DFPS training).
- **VI.A.3** Host one Trial Skills Training (TST) event in FY 2019. \$26,000.
- **VI.B.1** Support attendance at state and national judicial and legal conferences and training events. \$42,500 (AFL-CAN One-day, CWL Section, NACC, ABA Parent and Child Conference).

- **VII.A.1** Identify and promote data-driven, cross-disciplinary training opportunities to address disproportionality and disparities among children and families involved in child protection cases. \$75,000 (potential Implicit Bias training or other, included in TCJ Training Grant).

- **VIII.A.1** Continue the mutually respectful and ongoing relationships with Texas' three federally recognized tribes and other tribal nations living in Texas.

- **IX.A.1.** Engage in activities integral to the Children's Commission's functions and operations.

