

**Arkansas Child Welfare Oversight Panel**  
**Tuesday, October 6th, 2015**  
**Meeting Notes**

**Welcome 2:00**

**Panel Members in Attendance**

Ann Meythaler  
Ann Stanley  
Charles Flynn  
Christy Erwin  
Connie Hickman Tanner  
Jennifer Ferguson  
Judge Carlton Jones  
Judge Mike Medlock  
Judge Wiley Branton  
Justice Rhonda Wood  
Lauri Currier  
Lori Poston  
Major Ron Stayton  
Melissa Choate  
Nautica Finney  
Nicole Potts  
Page Walley  
Representative Charlotte Douglas  
Senator Bart Heste  
Stacy THompson  
Steven Choate  
Tabitha McNulty  
Cecile Blucker  
Keesa Smith  
Courtney Massey  
Betty Guhman

**Overview of Vincent Report**

Betty Guhman led the discussion with the panel about the main areas of interest in the Vincent Report. These areas briefly touched the issue. A more detailed look into the system can be found on the Governor's Child Welfare Website under the documents link. Among the areas Betty overviewed were Challenges/Areas of Concern, Strengths/Improvements, Overall Implementation Plan and Focus/Working groups.

Challenges/Areas of Concern

This area encompasses the areas that weaker areas in the system that need improvement. These areas cover issues such as growing foster care population, placement disruptions, untimely investigations, DHS retention rates etc.

Strengths/Improvements

This area highlights things that are going well or improving within the system. Among some of those things are improvements in thoroughness of investigations, decreased average adoption times, increased percentage of children receiving support and protective services, etc.

Overall Implementation Plan

The implementation plan is divided into 3 areas of planning: Governor's Office leadership, Oversight Panel and legislative support. The Governor's Office's responsibilities are geared toward establishing goals, milestones and outcomes while

ensuing stakeholder involvement, transparency and accountability. The Oversight Panel reviews the implementation plan and insures meaningful involvement with stakeholders and participation in focus groups. Legislative support comes from preparations for the Fiscal session in 2016 and regular session in 2017. The legislative committee will also have an interim study proposal conducted to analyze the fiscal and policy impact of reports and recommendations.

#### Focus/Working Groups

As part of Paul Vincent's recommendations for the Oversight Panel, 5 working groups will be established with members of the Oversight Panel divided among the 5 groups. These groups will address specific areas of concern, and it is up to group members to determine appropriate outcomes for that area of focus. The 5 groups include:

1. Child Safety
2. Permanency/Placements
3. Administrative Flexibility
4. Partnerships/Practice Models
5. Resource Availability In-Home and Community based services

#### **Oversight Panel Member Introductions**

##### Legislative Branch:

-Representative David Meeks, Representative Charlotte Douglas, Senator Bart Hester, Senator Missy Irvin

##### Judicial Branch

-Arkansas Supreme Court Commission on Children, Youth and Families- Justice Rhonda Wood

-Administrative Office of the Courts- Connie Hickman Tanner

-Juvenile Judges- Judge Wiley Branton, Judge Cindy Theyer, Judge Mike Medlock, and Judge Carlton Jones

-Public Defender Commission- Tabitha McNulty

##### Executive Branch

Arkansas State Police CACD- Major Ron Stayton

##### Stakeholders/Advocates

-Child Advocacy Centers- Stacy Thompson

-Arkansas Advocates for Children and Youth- Jennifer Ferguson

-Faith based organization reps- Lauri Currier (The CALL), Charles Flynn (Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes)

-Foster/Adoptive Children and Parents- Melissa & Steven Choate, Christy Irvin, Nicole Potts, Sandy & Dean Burbank, Ann Meythaler

-Youth Advisory Board Representative- Nautica Finney, Gretchen Skinner

-Biological Parent- Wendy Founds

-Arkansas Mental Health Council- Lori Poston (works for Mid-South)

-Citizen Advocate- Jane Shippman

##### Ex-Officio Members

-Casey Family Foundation- Page Walley, Paul Vincent, Ann Stanley

-DHS- John Selig, Keesa Smith, Cecile Blucker

#### **Wrap-up**

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 19th from 3:00 to 4:30 in Capitol Committee Room 149

**Adjourned 3:30**