



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES

Legislative Council Conference Room
Madison, Wisconsin

November 21, 2006
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

[The following is a summary of the November 21, 2006 meeting of the Special Committee on Strengthening Wisconsin Families. The file copy of this summary has appended to it a copy of each document prepared for or submitted to the committee during the meeting. A digital recording of the meeting is available on our Web site at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc>.]

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Kestell called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The roll was called and a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Steve Kestell, Chair; Rep. Don Pridemore; Sens. Lena Taylor and Dale Schultz; and Public Members Jon Angeli, John Burgess, Charity Eleson, Paul Minkus, Kenneth Munson, Jodi Roberts, Paula Roberts, and Jack Westman.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED: Rep. Donna Seidel; and Public Members Lisa Boyd-Gonzalez and Carol Kelso.

COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT: Laura Rose, Deputy Director; and Scott Grosz, Staff Attorney.

APPEARANCES: Curtis Marshall; Dan Naylor; Tom Prete; Terence Ray; and Brenda Bell-White.

Approval of the Minutes of the October 24, 2006 Meeting

Mr. Burgess moved, seconded by Dr. Westman, to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2006 meeting of the Special Committee. The motion was approved by a voice vote.

Description of Materials Distributed

Laura Rose described Memo No. 3, *Wisconsin Workforce Development Programs*, and Memo No. 4, *Home Visitation Programs Information*. Scott Grosz described Memo No. 5, *Characteristics of Healthy Families*, which summarizes ideas submitted by Special Committee members. He also described a memorandum by Dianne Jenkins, Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) and Jane Penner-Hoppe, Department of Workforce Development (DWD), entitled *DWD and DHFS Service Integration Initiatives Targeted to Families and Children Involved in the W-2 and Child Welfare Systems*.

Mr. Grosz also highlighted three handouts that had been submitted by speaker Dan Naylor: *Coordinated Service Team (CST) Initiative; 2005 Annual Report on Integrated Services Projects and CSTs; and CST Initiative Team Process Overview*. Finally, Ms. Rose described a letter that had been submitted to committee members by Ann Kirchner, of Wisconsin Family Based Services Association.

Presentations by Invited Speakers

Terence Ray and Curtis Marshall, Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative. Mr. Ray and Mr. Marshall, leaders in the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative, provided a presentation to the committee on the initiative and the Fatherhood Summit that was held in Milwaukee on October 13th and 14th, 2006. Mr. Ray provided some statistics on the effects on children of growing up without fathers. Mr. Marshall, who was also representing DHFS, discussed how the involvement of fathers in the prenatal period can increase the likelihood of healthy birth outcomes. He also described how the Milwaukee Fatherhood Summit involved collaboration between the Wisconsin DHFS' Division of Public Health, individual stakeholders, the Milwaukee Bureau of Child Welfare, and DWD. Mr. Ray noted that one of the most widely attended workshops at the summit was the driver's license recovery workshop. Mr. Marshall noted that another popular workshop was on the accrual of interest and penalties on child support obligations while a payor is incarcerated.

In response to questions from committee members, there was some description of the Nurturing Fathers Program, an evidence-based national model that has been utilized by the North Carolina Department of Corrections and other entities.

Tom Prete, CW Solutions, Inc., Cuba City. Mr. Prete described the family systems theory approach his organization uses in working with families involved with the W-2 and Child Welfare Systems. Mr. Prete suggested that the committee examine the family systems theory approach as a method of delivering human services, and that W-2 workers and child welfare workers should be trained in this approach so that they can speak a common language with each other. In response to committee questions, Mr. Prete stated that the family systems theory approach is probably a reframing of the family-based services approach that was utilized in the late 1980s. Mr. Prete also stated that the University of Iowa School of Social Work has data on outcomes in the use of family systems theory methods.

Brenda Bell-White, Director, Milwaukee Family Services Integration Office. Ms. Bell-White stated that the goal of the newly established Milwaukee Family Services Integration Office is to integrate services for the Departments of Workforce Development, Corrections, and Health and Family Services in the Milwaukee area. The office, which has been up and running for a little over a month, is

focusing on systems integration between the W-2 and child welfare systems to advance the Families Forward-Wisconsin Initiative; employment and human services integration to improve the economic self-sufficiency and well-being of the corrections population and their families; and coordination of employment and training services for families engaged in the public health birth outcomes improvement project. She stated that future focus areas of the office would include teen pregnancy prevention, foster care youth transitions, and fatherhood initiatives like those described earlier in the meeting. She stated that the office is developing a work plan which she hopes to have completed by the end of January 2007. Ms. Bell-White stated that she plans to convene a monthly meeting of the Milwaukee managers of the three involved agencies (DWD, DHFS, and Corrections).

Dan Naylor, White Pine Consulting Service, Inc., Waupaca. Mr. Naylor described his work with Coordinated Services Teams (CSTs). This is a method for the human services delivery system to deal with people in a more holistic way. He stated that program participants are frustrated by piecemeal responses from the different agencies they are involved with, and that it can be difficult to share information among the different entities that deal with families. Mr. Naylor distributed handouts describing the CST process. He stated that a family's natural and community supports systems are critical members of the CST. He said the focus of the CST needs to move away from compliance with rules and towards meaningful outcomes for the families. He commented that by 2007, the CSTs will be in place in 50 counties and tribes in Wisconsin. He said that every county and tribe needs to be able to utilize this process. The committee discussed the issue of how to coordinate information sharing among different agencies involving with families. The committee also discussed coordination of CST efforts with the economic support agencies in counties.

Discussion of Committee Assignment

After a lunch break, the committee discussed its assignment. Dr. Westman described his handout, *The Public Cost of Struggling Families*. Committee members discussed Wisconsin's investment in children, such as four-year old kindergarten, full-day kindergarten, child care, and other programs. The committee also discussed trends in corrections funding over the last 20 years. There was discussion about reallocating funds from existing programs to any new initiatives. Committee members made several suggestions about actions the committee could take, including: mandating a family systems approach and cross-agency collaborations; studying confidentiality issues and how they inhibit "agency" collaboration; examining how the W-2 and child welfare systems recognize fathers and focus on employment of fathers; approaching each state policy and program with the focus on how it impacts "family" interests; building on existing Wisconsin programs that show evidence of working, such as CSTs; focusing on improving quality in early education and child care programs; examining programs that may not yet have achieved success, to see what program elements are worth building on; continuing to attempt to define the problems that this committee is trying to solve; expanding the nurturing fathers model beyond focusing just on parents coming out of prisons and jails; creating better pathways for low-income and under employed persons to economic independence; changing the name of the Children's First program in DWD to Families First; and incorporating family mentoring.

Committee members were encouraged to submit any additional suggestions to staff at least two weeks prior to the next committee meeting.

Other Business

There was no other business before the Special Committee at this time.

Plans for Future Meetings

The *Tuesday, December 12, 2006, meeting of the Special Committee has been cancelled.* The next meeting will be held on January ____, 2007.

Adjournment

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

LR:tlu