

# **ND Juvenile Justice State Advisory Group (SAG)**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Date: December 5, 2025

Time: 10:00 am – 12:10 pm

Location: NDACo (in-person with virtual option)

### **Call to Order**

The chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum was present. Members attending in person and virtually were welcomed. Corey Lee, Stark County Sheriff, was formally introduced and welcomed as a new SAG member.

### **Attendance**

Members present at the meeting in person included Chairman Terry Traynor, Lisa Bjergaard, Representative Jayme Davis, Cathy Ferderer, Lynn Flieth, Mark Heinert, Corey Lee, Russ Riehl, Caisee Sandusky, Derek Steiner, and Jennifer Withers. Virtual participation included Joel Friesz, Cristie Jacobsen, Kylie Schultz, and Olivia Revels-Strother. Members absent included Travis Finck, Dusty Johnson, Senator Diane Larson, Ivory Nordaune, and MiLinda Turner. Board administrator Lisa Jahner was also present. Guests and presenters included Beth Ziman (Oliver Mercer Special Education Unit), Bird Guess (Consultant), and Karli Keator (National Assessment Center Association). A quorum was present.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the September 12, 2025 meeting was presented for approval. Lisa Bjergaard moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

### **School-Based Interventions Subgrant Report**

Beth Ziman provided an update on the grant to the Oliver-Mercer Special Education Unit pursuant to the RFP for school-based interventions. The funding is helping a number of school districts and efforts are focused on de-escalation training and crisis prevention. Over 160 staff members have been trained, affecting approximately 1,500 students. Early outcomes included improved staff confidence and classroom climate.

### **Racial and Ethnic Disparities Update (Cass County)**

Consultant Bird Guess provided an update on the systems-level work in Cass County to address racial and ethnic disparities. Bird has been gathering both qualitative and quantitative data, including data on how system stakeholders interact with each other and whether best practices are present and active. Focus groups were conducted with multiple stakeholders, with more outreach planned.

### **SAG Planning Subcommittee Report**

Russ Riehl provided an update relative to the subcommittee, and discussion about the possible pilot of a family resource hub (aka assessment center). The SAG Planning Subcommittee recommended pursuing technical assistance from the National Assessment Center Association in this regard.

### **National Assessment Center Association (NAC) Presentation**

Karli Keator with the NAC provided an in-depth presentation on resource center models operating in other states and communities. She explained that these centers or hubs serve as centralized access points for youth and families, offering screening, referral, case management, and diversion support prior to or instead of formal court involvement.

Ms. Keator also explained the importance of collaboration with existing systems and services, and the use of data to identify service gaps. She shared outcome data demonstrating reductions in recidivism and improved coordination among agencies. Members discussed how such a model could complement North Dakota's existing services.

### **Approval of Technical Assistance**

Following discussion, the group considered the Planning Subcommittee's recommendation to engage the NAC for technical assistance. Russ Riehl moved to approve a technical assistance contract with the NAC for \$23,200. The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

### **Consultant Selection – Racial and Ethnic Disparities (Burleigh County)**

Representative Davis provided an overview of the reissued request for proposals to support the work related to reducing racial and ethnic disparities in Burleigh County. Six proposals were received, with four advancing to interviews. Following scoring and deliberation, the selection committee recommended awarding a contract to Bird Guess based on his data-driven approach, experience engaging diverse stakeholders, and focus on sustainable systems change. Representative Davis moved to approve a contract award to Bird Guess. The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

### **Update on Children's Cabinet**

To ensure alignment of efforts related to youth in North Dakota, an update on the Children's Cabinet was provided by the SAG members who are also members of the Cabinet.

### **Federal Grant Funding for Preventing School Violence**

Lisa Jahner informed the group about a federal discretionary grant application that had recently been submitted that would bring resources to schools if awarded. The grant application is for \$1.7 million with most of the funding going to an organization named Rachel's Challenge, a national organization focusing on building connection within school environments. All public and private and tribal schools in North Dakota would be eligible.

### **Member Update**

Mark Heinert provided an update relative to Youthworks and the work of the organization.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:10 p.m.