



## Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force

*Communities Keeping Children Safe and Families Together*

**Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force Meeting  
November 13, 2023, 1:00 to 4:00 pm  
Meeting Minutes**

[Meeting Recording](#)

[Main Slide deck](#)

<p><b>In Attendance</b></p>	<p>Dana E. Blackwell, Co-Chair Roger De Leon Jr., Co-Chair</p> <p>Diana Boyer Teresa Castillo Charity Chandler-Cole André Chapman Sarah Cook Dr. Khush Cooper Mercie DiGangi Diane Elias Janay Eustace Kelly Graesch Shane Harris Tamara Hunter Hilary Kerrigan</p> <p>Hillary Konrad Shelley Lopez Danielle Lowe Joan Miller Kathryn Miller Jenny Pearlman Raina Peres-Diaz Christina Riehl Tina Rios Zoila Perez Sanchez Jason Sharpe Melinda Sokolowski Luciana Svidler Erika Torres Arati Vasan Daniel Webster</p>
<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>Roger De Leon Jr. and Dana Blackwell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-Chairs Roger De Leon Jr. and Dana Blackwell welcomed the Task Force members and guests. Dana made a land and labor acknowledgement, which will occur at the beginning of each Task Force meeting.</li> <li>• Member connections – Word Cloud</li> <li>• Jenny Pearlman moved to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2023 MRCS Task Force meeting and Khush Cooper seconded the motion. All voted in favor.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Opening Public Comment</b></p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>Grounding the Work</b>  Roger De Leon Jr.  Janay Eustace  Beth Kuentler</p>	<p><u>The “why” of the work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Roger introduced Janay Eustace and stated that we are intentionally starting our meeting with a conversation with someone who has lived experience. He invited others with lived experience if they want to share their “why” in the future, to contact one of the Chairs. Janay has lived experience and currently serves as the Executive Director of California Youth Connection and will be transitioning soon to President and Chief Executive Officer of the Child Abuse Prevention Center.</li> <li>● Janay stated that looking around and seeing so many familiar faces is evidence of the history of this work and the long standing and very deep work done together as a community. She said that communities deserve their families and families deserve their children. Community is how we all are grounded in who we are. Janay recently met with someone who told her about a report that was done over 20 years ago, and a lot of the information in the report is exactly the same issues that we are facing today. And Janay said the same is true with her own story. Twenty-five years ago, she lived in a zip code that still has the highest removal rate today. It was an under-resourced area with crime and poverty, and everything is the same today. When she entered the child welfare system 25 years ago, her family had been evicted from the fifth apartment in a two-year period. Those evictions were connected to addiction and the rapidly rising cost of rent. The same month that she entered foster care about 30 other kids from her apartment complex also entered care. She emphasized that is a resource issue as well as an issue of how we define safety and well-being and who we rely on as those experts in the community. People wear mandated reporting as a badge of honor: I am a mandated reporter, I protect children. However, the mandated reporting system actually harms children because that safety comes with a lot of bias. Systems should not be raising children. Families and communities should raise children. We know the data and outcomes when young people leave the foster care system, and if they are not connected to family or community. They are not doing well. Janay said she is a community supporter because she wants to see all those young people back in their communities, healthy communities. She concluded by saying that we can do so much better, and the time is now. Maybe 20 years ago the time wasn't right, but the time is now. Communities are strong and ready to do this work. She said the Task Force is made up of transformers who must continue to do the work, no matter how scary. It takes all of us living in the uncomfortable zone to push.</li> <li>● Roger added that timing is everything and this moment feels like the right time with momentum and all the work done in the past was not in vain. He is convinced that the Task Force is on the path with the right individuals who have the heart and the passion to see this work through.</li> </ul> <p><u>Qualitative data review and discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beth introduced the <a href="#">Key Informant Interview summary</a>. Highlights:</li> </ul>

- o Interviews were conducted May through September 2023.
- o There was work done with key informants before the Task Force and Subcommittees were created as a way to inform the structure and process. The Chairs of the Research & Data Subcommittee were also involved with the later interviews.
- o The key informant interviews were one-on-one interviews with nearly 30 people.
- o The first set of interviews were with Child Welfare Council members to dive deeper into their reasons for approving the PEI Community Pathway Recommendations and creation of this Task Force and to hear any concerns that they might want to address early on.
- o The second round was with 25+ individuals who do not have lived expertise but have information about how mandated reporting needs to, and can be, changed.
- o Key Informant Interviews with individuals with lived expertise were intentionally sequenced to receive guidance from the Task Force on where, how and when to do additional quantitative research with families, communities and youth. So that will be the next step.
- Key take-aways from the interviews:
  - o There was nearly unanimous support for the goals of the Task Force.
  - o Almost all key informant folks said that there will be significant challenges to this work and to the adoption of a paradigm shift.
  - o There is no single solution and this will take policy, legislation, and narrative work, as well as on the ground organizing.
- Additionally, Beth summarized elements needed to move the work forward (see the [slides](#) for details).
- Beth also shared the top line learnings (see the [slides](#) for details).
- Daniel Webster added that is just a starting point. The Subcommittees will surface other important avenues to pursue. This is not meant to be inclusive of everything, but just a starting point and information to get us going, but certainly not meant to be comprehensive.
- Dana lifted up that there are focus groups with folks with lived experience happening around the State and the Task Force wants to coordinate with those efforts and build on that work. If you are aware of any focus groups or interviews that you think would be helpful, please reach out to Beth or the Chairs.
- Jason Sharpe said that he is very grateful to be a part of the Research & Data subcommittee and he tries to bring the lens of lived experience to the data and to keep that as a foundation.
- Sabrina Forte stated the need to live in the uncomfortable zone when it comes to data because they will be trying to collect as much research and data as possible and staying cognizant of the deadline and navigating the things they know, the things they don't know, and the data points that actually raise more questions than answers. She believes the interviews were helpful and will generate questions that will ultimately help get to the recommendations.

- Arati Vasan shared that in her experience the lack of data or the view that the data isn't good enough has been used as an excuse not to make change. Further she said there is no data that shows that mandated reporting works, and yet every year more people are added as mandated reporters. She wants to avoid a framework in which the Task Force needs think tanks and academics and data to show that there's a problem, and it needs to be solved. Arati added that there is a lot of talk about evidence based but the mandated reporting system itself is not evidence based, or at least the evidence shows that it shouldn't be in place as is.
- Andre Chapman stated the benefit of the Task Force work is there are a lot of folks with lived experience as well as a lot of experts in this field. He asked if there is a subcommittee for implementation of the recommendations or if that would come later. He challenged the Task Force to think about implementation, because what often happens particularly for African American communities, is a lot of assessments and gathering data. And then nothing happens in the community. He calls it paratrooper syndrome. He urged the Task Force to be intentional when thinking about recommendations to consider what will happen on the ground and what does that look like. If the Task Force does not take it all the way from A to Z, then the recommendations are left open for interpretation and excuses about not having funding or other reasons they cannot be implemented.
- Conor Maloney, a member of the Legal & Liability Subcommittee, added what often gets missed is the cultural and historical intergenerational trauma, and with respect to mandated reporting, how families have been impacted and affected. He hopes the Task Force can challenge itself to look through this lens with families, especially families who are undocumented and families who don't have education or an understanding how the systems operate.
- Antonia Rios, a member of the public, shared that she is a Latina Native American, who was failed not only as a child, but as a parent. She said that her children and her mother were also failed and traumatized by the system. She said every year she hears about change and what needs to be done in the system, changes are very minimal to nothing. Parents Anonymous was the only thing in her life that supported her in the areas she needed. She and her family were belittled, judged, and criticized. It is important to bring a variety of resources to parents and allow them to utilize what best fits them.
- Antoinette Fabela, a member of the public stated that she is a retired social worker, a consultant for the Indian Child Welfare Act, a qualified expert witness and a member of various committees dealing with Indian families and children. Regarding lived experience, she suggested speaking with social workers as they also have knowledge of what the system does to families.
- Khush Cooper raised a question regarding the subcommittees for clarification at some point. Where do issues of law end and policy start? Who is working on the legal issues as they relate to organizational policy? And which organizational policies are the subcommittees working on -- education, child welfare, juvenile justice?
- Dana responded that Khush's question leads to the issue intersection among the subcommittees. One of the challenges is how to ensure that there is connectivity

	<p>across those subcommittees so that we are building from and learning from the outputs of each of subcommittees and can develop recommendations that are achievable and sustainable.</p>
<p><b>External Communications</b> Beth Kuentler</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beth shared the <a href="#">Key External Messages</a> which are the work of the Task Force breakouts and workgroups.</li> <li>● Tina Rios read the North Star: “To keep children and families together safe, well, and strengthened by the resources they need to thrive.” She shared that the workgroup she attended recognized the importance of the wording that could not be used to continue policing families. They also wanted the words children and families close together to empower the Task Force mission and include the importance of resources for parents and families.</li> <li>● Andre added he is glad to see resources in there, because without that there are no tools to get it done.</li> <li>● Beth then shared the We Believe statements to bring into Task Force members’ communications and conversations. She also introduced the external statement, which is like an elevator speech. She stated the hope is that the Task Force will start to use the communications tools and modify them to fit their needs as well as add their own stories about their “why” for becoming involved in this work.</li> <li>● Dana asked for feedback from members as they begin using the statements, weaving them into their work, and using the elevator speech. She stated that this is the beginning of the narrative change and the Task Force will continue to evolve the communications based on utilization and feedback.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Subcommittee Working Sessions</b> Dana Blackwell Subcommittee Members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dana thanked people who agreed to Chair the subcommittees and who have been working hard since the October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting to bring the Subcommittees to life.</li> <li>● Dana shared that there are over 100 people participating in the work of the Task Force through the Task Force itself and Subcommittees. Over 200 people applied to serve on a Subcommittee. The selected Subcommittee members are diverse in their experience, race, ethnicity and voice. There is a support team around each of the Subcommittees to help move the work forward as expeditiously as possible. Our subcommittees will meet at every task force meeting, and there will be work done in between. The commitment of the Subcommittees is important because that's really where the work happens.</li> </ul> <p>BREAK INTO SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS – Public chose which Subcommittee meeting to attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Following the break-out Subcommittee meetings, Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin asked if people with lived experience would have travel paid for to attend the December 5<sup>th</sup> meeting in person. Beth responded that people with lived experience are compensated for their time in the meetings. Dana added that travel for the meeting is paid for Task Force members and there will be a virtual option for Subcommittee members and the public who do not attend in person.</li> <li>● Shane Harris requested an item for the December 5th agenda around in-person public engagement. He expressed concern about the Task Force’s lack of in-person meetings in communities throughout the State. Based on Shane’s experience with community</li> </ul>

	<p>organizing he emphasized the importance of community feedback. He suggested a quick study on what the Reparations Task force did for its community engagement and public meetings throughout the State.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dana expressed appreciation for the suggestion and requested that Shane provide information about the Reparations Task Force work to guide the Task Force discussion. Shane agreed to provide an agenda item, background, and information ahead of the meeting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Next Steps &amp; Announcements</b></p> <p>Beth Kuenstler</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next Task Force meeting is December 5<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 to 4:00 pm.</li> <li>• Next steps for the Subcommittees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Each subcommittee will meet at least once before the next MRCS Task Force meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>o Keep an eye out for emails from the Subcommittee Staffers with notes and meeting information.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• External communications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Task Force members should start using the key messages and bring back feedback on what's working, what's not working, what you need more of. Beth and Kathy Bonk are available to provide support and answer any questions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 2024 Task Force meeting dates will be sent out and posted on the Child Welfare Council website. All materials from previous and upcoming meetings of the Task Force and the Subcommittees may be found on this site: <p><a href="https://www.chhs.ca.gov/home/committees/california-child-welfare-council/#mandated-reporting-to-community-supporting-task-force">https://www.chhs.ca.gov/home/committees/california-child-welfare-council/#mandated-reporting-to-community-supporting-task-force</a></p> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Closing Public Comment</b></p>	<p>Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin stated that the vision statement should include “parents”. She explained that parents are the human beings that are reported to the system, not families. And in order to change the system, we need to ask parents what they need to thrive. She feels that discounting parents is another way to discriminate. Dr. Lisa added that the issue of trauma also needs to be included.</p>
<p><b>Closing</b></p> <p>Roger De Leon Jr</p>	