

Approved: _____
Date

1/25/99

MINUTES OF THE SENATE WAYS & MEANS.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dave Kerr at 11:00 a.m. on January 21, 1999 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Alan Conroy, Legislative Research Department
Debra Hollon, Legislative Research Department
Rae Anne Davis, Legislative Research Department
Norman Furse, Revisor of Statutes
Michael Corrigan, Revisor of Statutes
Judy Bromich, Administrative Assistant
Ann Deitcher, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Rochelle Chronister, Secretary of Dept. of SRS
Bob Hartman of Kansas Children's Service League
Melissa Ness of Kansas Children's Service League
Judge Jennifer Jones, 18th Judicial District, Sedgwick

Others attending: See attached list.

Senator Kerr introduced SRS Secretary, Rochelle Chronister, who gave a brief overview of why the foster care program is in its present status. She said that when she came to the agency in May of 1995 one of her first concerns was around child protective service investigation. Their belief was that the social workers simply did not have time to do the investigations in the way they needed to be done. At that time they were also responsible for foster care, adoption and family preservation. Secretary Chronister feels that they've accomplished what they set out to do. They have improved the investigation of child abuse and neglect in the state of Kansas. SRS has met the settlement standards for 24 of the 26 requirements in child protective services. She said that more children are truly safe.

In the area of adoptions, the state program had an increase in the number of completed adoptions of more than 80%. The disruption rate is half the country's rate so not only are more children being moved into adoption, those children are staying in place in those homes.

Next to speak to the Committee was Joyce Allegrucci, Commissioner of Children and Family Services who discussed the foster care and adoption programs. (Attachment 1). She said that one of the major accomplishments was in the terms of child safety where the agency is doing much better. They know that the SRS workers now concentrate on child safety. That was the goal and it has paid off.

The Commissioner said that what they are looking at and hope to move forward as soon as they can in expanding family preservation. She did say however, is if they expand to include more families with more severe problems they could lower the success rate. But it's been pointed out that if they've been this successful they're really not doing their job because they're not reaching the families that need to be reached.

Melissa Ness of Kansas Children's Service League, said that what they do and what they focus on is very compatible with what the state, the Secretary and the Commissioner has asked them to do. That is to keep children safe, to move them to permanence and to do that in "child time". (Attachments 2 and 3).

Bob Hartman of Kansas Children's Service League gave a brief overview of the agency saying that they are involved in a full range of services from prevention, early intervention, intensive counseling services, to placement and advocacy or public policy work. He said they have received approximately 1500 referrals in foster care since the beginning of the contractual relationship, in family preservation they've received 903 referrals and they have served over 440 children in adoptive services.

Mr. Hartman said that they appreciate their partnership with SRS as well as the diligence that the Legislature has already taken to look into the foster care system.

When asked if there were any specific items that he could point the Committee toward, Mr. Hartman said that generally targeting assistance to the courts with their caseloads and addressing the adoption of the Safe Families Act. Also training is another theme they want to see significance support in with a new force of child-care workers.

Judge Jennifer L. Jones, 18th Judicial District, Wichita testified next prefacing her comments by stating that they would be as viewed from the bench and they may not be the same as what has been heard thus far. She then spoke on the privatization issues and concerns. (Attachment 4).

Judge Jones was asked about the claim made by SRS that one of the reintegration outcomes was that 40% of the children placed in out-of-home care were returned to the family or achieved permanency within six months of referral. Another claim was that 65% of children achieved permanency within one year. In her opinion, did she believe that if the right things were being done by the contractor, were these achievable goals. The Judge said that she believed the one year claim but not the six month. Unless the provider network is expanded she doesn't believe this is a workable goal.

The question was also asked as to whether it was true there are times when children in foster care could be out of foster care but for a judge's signature. Judge Jones said that everything needed obviously is not in place or the judge would be only too happy to sign and let it go through. There have many times that all she needed was the assurance that a plan was in place to improve the situation and she would sign, but the order was ignored. She concluded by saying that between the state agency, the contractor and the court there needs to be collaboration and communication on everyone's part. They each must be considered a part of the partnership.

It was moved by Senator Ranson and seconded by Senator Jordan to introduce 9 rs 0255. The motion carried on a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 25, 1999.

SENATE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: 1/21/99

NAME	REPRESENTING
Ken Bahr	Ks. Governmental Consulting
Rochelle Christensen	SRS
LINDA McGill	MGA
Merilyn Jacobson	SRS
John DiAlain Jr.	Senator Pugh
Joyce Allegrucci	SRS-CFS
Stacey Farmer	KASB
Bonnie Pennie	Families Together, Inc.
TK Shively	Ks LEGAL SERVICES
Melissa L. Ness	Ks Children's Service League
MAUREEN MALONEY	KAW VALLEY CENTER
Bob Hartman	Ks Children's Ser. League
Melissa Brisen	The Farm, Inc.
Paul Johnson	PACK
Greg Tugman	DoB
Shirley Thomas	DoB
Diane Gjerstad	Wichita Public Schools
John Garlinga	SRS

**State of Kansas
Department of Social
& Rehabilitation Services**

Rochelle Chronister, Secretary
Janet Schalansky, Deputy
Secretary

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**Senate Ways and Means
January 21, 1999**

Testimony: Foster Care and Privatization Funding

**Children and Family Services
Joyce Allegrucci, Commissioner
(785) 368-6448**

Senate Ways and Means Committee

Date *1/21/99*

Attachment # *1-1*

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Attachment A	Kansas Child Welfare Initiatives Overview
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**Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Service
Rochelle Chronister, Secretary**

**Senate Ways and Means
Foster Care and Privatization Funding**

January 21, 1999

Mr. Chairperson and members of the Committee. I am Joyce Allegrucci, Commissioner of Children and Family Services. I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss our foster care and adoption programs. As most of you know, Kansas has made innovative changes in the delivery of child welfare services by forging public and private partnerships to provide family preservation, foster care and adoption services. This effort is commonly referred to as privatization and sometimes managed care. While the contractual partnerships formed with the Kansas private child welfare agencies contain elements of both, it is neither in the purist form. Providing care to of some of the states most vulnerable children is accomplished with public and private child welfare professionals working in partnership.

I will provide you with a brief overview of:

- ▶ how we got to where we are to day
- ▶ the major accomplishments achieved
- ▶ what we have learned
- ▶ where we plan to be in the future.

HOW WE GOT TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY

- SRS took the challenge Governor Graves gave early in his administration to review what services we were providing that could be provided by private entities.
- The private sector was already providing many foster care, adoption and family preservation services.
- SRS staff was stretched to the limit of its capacity to provide child protection services.
- The decision was made to "privatize" foster care, adoption and family preservation services. July 1, 1996 contracts were awarded to five agencies to provide Family Preservation Services in five regions of the state.
- October 1, 1996 a statewide contract was made for adoption services.
- March 1, 1997 contracts were awarded to three agencies to provide foster care services in five regions. Each contract established a capped case rate and was outcome based.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- For the first time Family Preservation Services are available to families in all parts of the state.
- Contractors have met or exceeded the outcomes related to child safety, maintaining children with the family, keeping siblings together in placement, minimizing placement moves before a child is returned home or adopted, and client satisfaction.
- SRS staff have been able to concentrate their attention on child abuse investigation reflected in the fact confirmation rates have gone from 11% a year ago to 41% today.
- More children are being placed in adoptive homes and more adoptions are being finalized.
- A fuller continuum of services is available to children and families statewide, twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

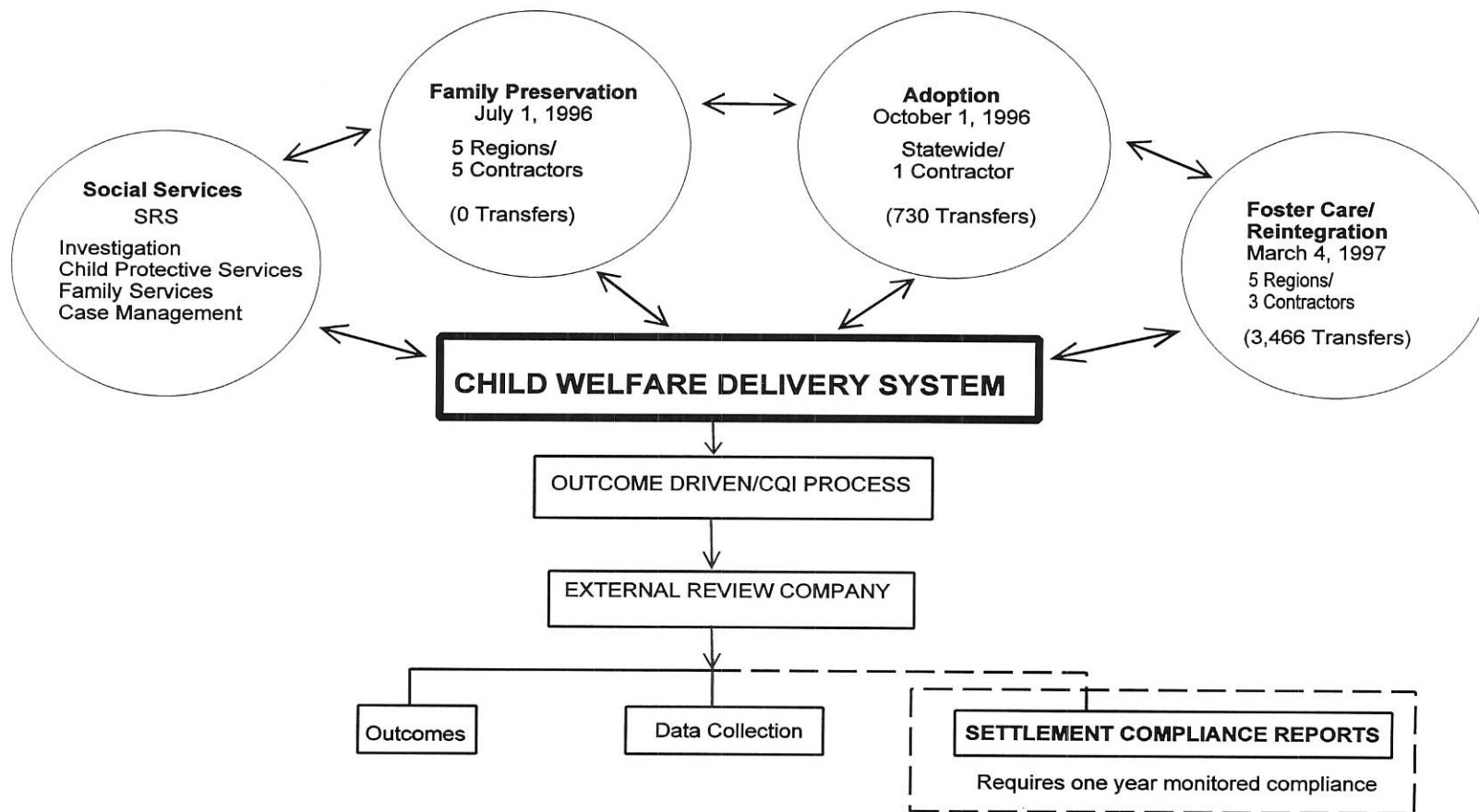
- Children have not moved to permanency as fast as was anticipated. (See Attachment B - Outcome Charts)
- Family Preservation, which is a relatively small and discrete service, is working much as anticipated and within costs.
- Expectations in regard to how quickly adoptive resources would be found for some of the children with greater needs was overestimated, however progress is being shown.
- We underestimated the impact other partners, such as the legal system, in achieving permanency for children.
- Our initial inability to isolate all costs in the delivery of foster care and adoption services resulted in an underestimation of case expenditures.
- The contractors did not have a full understanding of the complexity of providing care to the numbers and types of children who enter the system.
- We underestimated the degree of complexity the ACLU settlement compliance requirements added to the overall picture.

WHERE WE PLAN TO BE IN THE FUTURE

- We will have a clear picture of the actual cost of delivering quality services.
- We will be able to establish outcomes that are based on validated data.
- We will have identified the impact of all key players in the child welfare system and removed barriers to achieving permanency for all children sooner.
- We will demonstrate that it is possible to keep costs in balance and to achieve accountability within the public and private sectors.
- We will have fewer children entering the system and they will exit more rapidly.

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KANSAS CHILD WELFARE INITIATIVES OVERVIEW



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FAMILY PRESERVATION

MEASURE	Year One	Year Two	Nov. 98
Outcome #1: Contractor shall accept all SRS referrals.			
1. 97% of all families shall be engaged in the treatment process.	98%	98.6%	98.2%
Outcome #2: Children will be safe from abuse and/or neglect.			
1. 90% of families will not have confirmed abuse or neglect during program participation.	98%	99.1%	99.8%
2. 80% of families successfully completing the program (no child removed from the home) will have no confirmed reports of abuse or neglect within six months of case closure.	97%	96%	95%
Outcome #3: Children will not require out of home placement.			
1. 80% of families will not have a child placed outside the home during program participation.	90%	91%	95.8%
2. 80% of families successfully completing the program (no children removed from the home) will not have a child placed outside the home within six months of case closure.	89%	92%	93%
Outcome #4: Deleted in year three.			
Outcome #5: Deleted in year two.			
Outcome #6: Family members will be satisfied with services provided.			
1. Participants (parents and youth ages 14 through 21 living in the home) will report 80% satisfaction measured by the Client Satisfaction Survey 30 days from the start of the program.	90%	91%	94%

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ADOPTION

MEASURE	Year One	Year Two	Nov. 98
Outcome #1: Children shall be placed for adoption in a timely manner.			
1. 55% of children shall be placed with adoptive families within 180 days of the receipt of the referral for adoption.	36.6%	40%	45%
2. 70% of children shall be placed with adoptive families within 365 days of the receipt of the referral for adoption.	N/A	67%	65%
Outcome #2: Children shall have permanent homes through the adoption process.			
1. 90% of adoptive placements shall be finalized within 12 months of the placement date.	N/A	89%	83%
2. 90% of adoptive placements shall continue to be intact 18 months following finalization.	N/A	100%	100%
Outcome #3: Adoptive family members shall be satisfied with adoptive services.			
1. 90% of families (parents and youth age 14 and over living in the home) shall report satisfaction with the adoption process at the time the adoption is finalized.	100%	92%	59%
Outcome #4: Siblings should be kept together.			
1. 65% of children will be placed with at least one sibling.	72.5%	69%	74%
Outcome #5: Children shall remain in the same foster care placement pending adoption.			
1. 90% of all children placed for adoption shall experience no more than two moves from the point in time parental rights are terminated until the adoption is finalized.	98%	99%	97.9%
Outcome #6: Children are safe from maltreatment			
1. 95% of children in the care and supervision of the contractor will not experience substantiated abuse/neglect prior to finalization.	N/C	99%	100%

N/A: Long Term outcome, not yet able to measure.

N/C: Outcome was added in subsequent year.

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REINTEGRATION (FOSTER/GROUP CARE)

MEASURE		Year One	Nov. 98
Outcome #1: Children are safe from maltreatment.			
1.	98% of children in the care and supervision of the contractor will not experience confirmed abuse/neglect while in placement.	99.9%	99.2%
2.	80% of children will not experience confirmed abuse/neglect within 12 months after reintegration.	N/A	96.6%
Outcome #2: Children experience a minimal number of placements.			
1.	70% of children referred to the contractor will have no more than three moves subsequent to referral.	96.8%	88.9%
2.	65% of all children will be placed with at least one sibling.	74.1%	78%
Outcome #3: Children maintain family, community and cultural ties.			
1.	70% of children referred after the implementation date are placed within their contract regional boundaries.	87.3%	80%
2.	75% of youth, 16 and over, released from custody have either completed high school, obtained a GED or are participating in an educational or job training program.	48.8%	80%
Outcome #4: Children are reunited with their families in a timely manner.			
1.	40% of children placed in out-of-home care are returned to the family or achieve permanency within six months of referral to contractor.	20.9%	25%
2.	90% of children integrated with their family do not re-enter out-of-home custody within one year of return home.	N/A	67%
3.	65% of children achieve permanency within one year of referral to contractor.	N/C	33%
Outcome #5: Clients will be satisfied with services.			
1.	80% of parents and youth (ages 14 and over) report satisfaction with services as measured by the Client Satisfaction Survey upon case closure.	62.2%	53% Adult 70% Youth

N/A: Long Term outcome, not yet able to measure.

N/C: Outcome was added in subsequent year.

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**Review of Foster Care Funding Issues
December 23, 1998**

I. Background

✓ **Initial Case Rates Per the Contracts**

Contractor	1st Year Rates Paid Per Child	2nd Year Rates Paid Per Child*	3rd Year Rates Paid Per Child	4th Year Rates Paid Per Child
Kansas Children's Service League	\$15,504	\$14,876	\$14,080	\$13,564
Kaw Valley Center	\$12,860	\$13,240	\$13,640	\$14,060
United Methodist Youthville	\$13,550	\$13,943	\$14,347	\$14,763

These moneys were intended to cover the cost of all placements and services (food, clothing, shelter, mental health services, etc.) until the child has been successfully placed at home. The contractor is also responsible for services for up to one year to ensure that the child remains at home. Physical medical treatment and drug and alcohol services are excluded from the rates. The concept was that the contractors would make money on some children and lose money on others, but would cover their costs overall.

✓ **Risk Share Per the Contracts**

The concept of risk share was a component of the original Foster Care contracts. Risk sharing was built into the contracts to compensate for a lack of historical data on expenditures and is redefined annually.

II. So, what happened?

- ✓ **SRS budgeted for Foster Care based on the initial case rates that turned out to be too low.** The case rates did not cover the contractors costs. SRS erred in not anticipating that the rates were too low and the subsequent substantial impact of risk share on the budget.
- ✓ **Increased Caseload.** The foster care contractors have had a significant increase in the number of children in their care. The number of open foster care cases - those the contractors still are responsible for- increased 34% overall from June 1997 to October 1998. There are two factors at work that explain the increase in the number of children in custody. First, children are staying in custody longer than was assumed in establishing the case rates. This increases the caseload because fewer children are leaving custody. Second, there has been an increase in the number of children coming into custody due to the increased emphasis on child abuse/neglect investigations.

III. What has SRS done?

- ✓ **SRS paid \$20.5 million for Risk Share Year 1.** Under the Year 1 provision, SRS paid two contractors, Kaw Valley and United Methodist Youthville, that allowed them to recoup part of their excess costs. The three contractors absorbed nearly \$5.0 million in losses. SRS managed to cover most of Year 1 Risk Share at the end of FY 98 by using one-time federal funds resulting from the Maximus revenue maximization project; forced savings in field operations; maximizing federal funds; underspending in child support pass through payments; and squeezing every available federal and state dollar.
- ✓ **SRS made a one-time payment of \$24.7 million to the contractors to help with the costs of the transition children who remained in custody longer than anticipated.** (SRS public announcement in September including presentation to Legislative Budget Committee). The additional funding was from the federal TANF Block Grant. TANF dollars for child welfare "emergency assistance" can be used for limited purposes for abused, neglected, and abandoned children.
- ✓ **SRS has issued a Request for Proposal** to contract with a vendor to do a financial data collection and analysis of the three foster care contractors and the adoption contractor. The vendor will collect data regarding average monthly costs, length of stay and rates paid by the contractors to subcontractors. The vendor will review cash flow and the financial position of each contractor and develop recommendations regarding the case rate payment system and the OCR payment system. The final report is anticipated to be completed by mid-April.
- ✓ **Foster Care negotiations for Year Three** (February, 1999 through June, 1999) are beginning this month. The negotiations have been accelerated in order to move the contract negotiations in concert with the State's budget cycle.



Kansas
Children's
Service League

"To protect and promote the well-being of all Kansas children by strengthening the quality of their family life through the provision of prevention, early intervention, treatment, advocacy or placement services"

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE, FAMILIES STRONG AND COMMUNITIES INVOLVED

KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE has a long and rich tradition of advocating for the needs of Kansas children and their families. A commitment to advocacy is reflected in the mission of our organization. Through our historic work in such areas as child labor laws, juveniles in adult jails, child abuse prevention, adoption laws and major system reform of the child welfare and juvenile justice system, KCSL is recognized as a trusted leader in helping shape policy reflective of the needs of the children and families we serve.

The challenges facing our families as well as the sweeping reforms Kansas has witnessed in health care, child welfare, and juvenile justice, demand that we remain diligent advocates. Taking what we know about the children and families we serve and placing it in the hands of people who will make a difference, is a critical obligation of KCSL.

To that end we again have targeted essential **legislative priorities** that our organization believes should be addressed by the **1999 Kansas Legislature**. These include policy and/or budget recommendations in four key areas: **Prevention and Intervention; Health Care; the Child Welfare System; and the Juvenile Justice System**. These priorities are designed to add to the foundation lawmakers and community partners have laid to keep *children safe, families strong and communities involved communities*.

For more information about our Advocacy and Education Program, contact KCSL's website at: www.kcsl.org.

Senate Ways and Means Committee

Date 1/21/99

Attachment # 2



LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING Senate Ways and Means

Submitted by: Kansas Children's Service League
January 21, 1999

KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE¹ (KCSL) is a statewide not-for-profit agency whose mission is to "promote the well-being of children by strengthening the quality of their family life through the provision of prevention, early intervention, treatment, advocacy and placement services."¹

This is an historic time in child welfare services. As an organization KCSL is proud to be a part of the challenges, growth, and progress made in improving the system for children and families in this state. Through the work of the SRS Transition Oversight Committee and the recent Legislative Post Audit Reports, we are beginning to develop a clear picture of what is working, and what the current challenges are for those of us who are committed to the success and continuous improvement of the child welfare system. Following we have outlined key points for discussion around our role in this system at this juncture.

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YOUTH SHELTER
2600 SE 23RD
TOPEKA, KS 66605
913-234-5424
913-234-8316 (FAX)

EMERGENCY
CHILDREN'S SHELTER
802 BUCHANAN
TOPEKA, KS 66606
913-232-8282
913-232-4142 (FAX)

OTHER LOCATIONS

CIMARRON
CLAY CENTER
CONCORDIA
DEERFIELD
GARDEN CITY
HUGOTON
HUTCHINSON
JUNCTION CITY
KANSAS CITY
LEOTI
LIBERAL
MANHATTAN
MANTER
MARYSVILLE
SALINA
SATANTA
SCOTT CITY
ULYSSES
WICHITA

▼ BACKGROUND: KCSL AS A FOSTER CARE CONTRACTOR

➤ **KCSL is a not for profit, mission driven agency whose board is committed to quality community services and systems reform.** KCSL is governed by a statewide board of directors. The service continuum we provide and the advocacy efforts in which we engage, are driven by the needs of the communities we serve. In part, our decision to bid for a contractual region was drawn from the support and confidence from the communities whom we have served for many years.

➤ **Foster Care Services:** Currently we provide foster care services in Region 3 which encompasses the SRS area of Topeka, Manhattan and Salina. Since the beginning of the foster care contract KCSL has received 1482 referrals for children in out of home care. Approximately one-half of those children remain in our care.

➤ **KCSL's Financial Structure:** Three quarters of our current total budget relates to our contracts of adoption, family preservation and foster care. Foster care comprises \$11 million of our total budget. We also receive a variety of federal grants such as Head Start. Additionally we receive funding from 30 United Ways and private contributions.

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¹The League is a Charter member of the Child Welfare League of America, is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Service for Children and Families, a member of the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse, the Children's Alliance of Kansas, the Coalition for America's Children and a founding member of the Children's Coalition.

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Date 1/21/99

Attachment # 3



▼ CURRENT CHALLENGES

- **We are continually developing our systems.** It is important to recognize that a system of this nature is not static. As such, we are faced with often time major modifications in how we deliver services or do business. As we have become more experienced we believe we can institute efficiencies that will ultimately lead to improvements in a more timely fashion.
- **Management Information Systems are not yet fully developed.** Although we have generated more information about the children in our system and the system itself, we need to become more skilled at how that information can be used to improve the system. We must work toward a more integrated management system while at the same time minimizing escalating administrative costs around the increasing demand for data.
- **Training is a key component in developing a skilled and qualified work force.** It is no secret that the new system has tapped the pool of qualified workers. Although turnover has leveled out from its initial trends, we must continue to address ways in which we can stabilize and support a developing work force. Clearly one of our best strategies is to provide support through ongoing training.
- **Service quality and cost containment.** As a provider of critical services, we must balance service needs of the child with financial viability. In assessing the costs of this system, consideration must be given to variables over which we have little control. Collateral systems such as education, health care, and the courts are not held to the same outcome standards as the child welfare system. The inherent conflict in philosophies coupled with the lack of shared outcomes often times creates significant barriers to our organization's ability to achieve outcomes.
- **It takes time to build relationships.** We continue to work with other community services, providers, the court system, the mental health systems, and the education system. It requires a great amount of effort on all our parts to identify mutual outcomes. Unfortunately, this is a slow process
- **Community service capacity.** We are committed to ensuring the use of as many existing community services as we can in the implementation of this contract. However, we still struggle with making sure the appropriate service is available to a child in our region and that we serve a child close to his or her home.

▼ TRENDS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

- Predicting case loads and service needs
- Incentives for innovation
- Using information to improve the system
- Investing our charitable dollars in prevention service to slow the front door of the system
- Developing accuracy and efficiency in our management information systems.

Presented by: Kansas Children's Service League

For additional information:

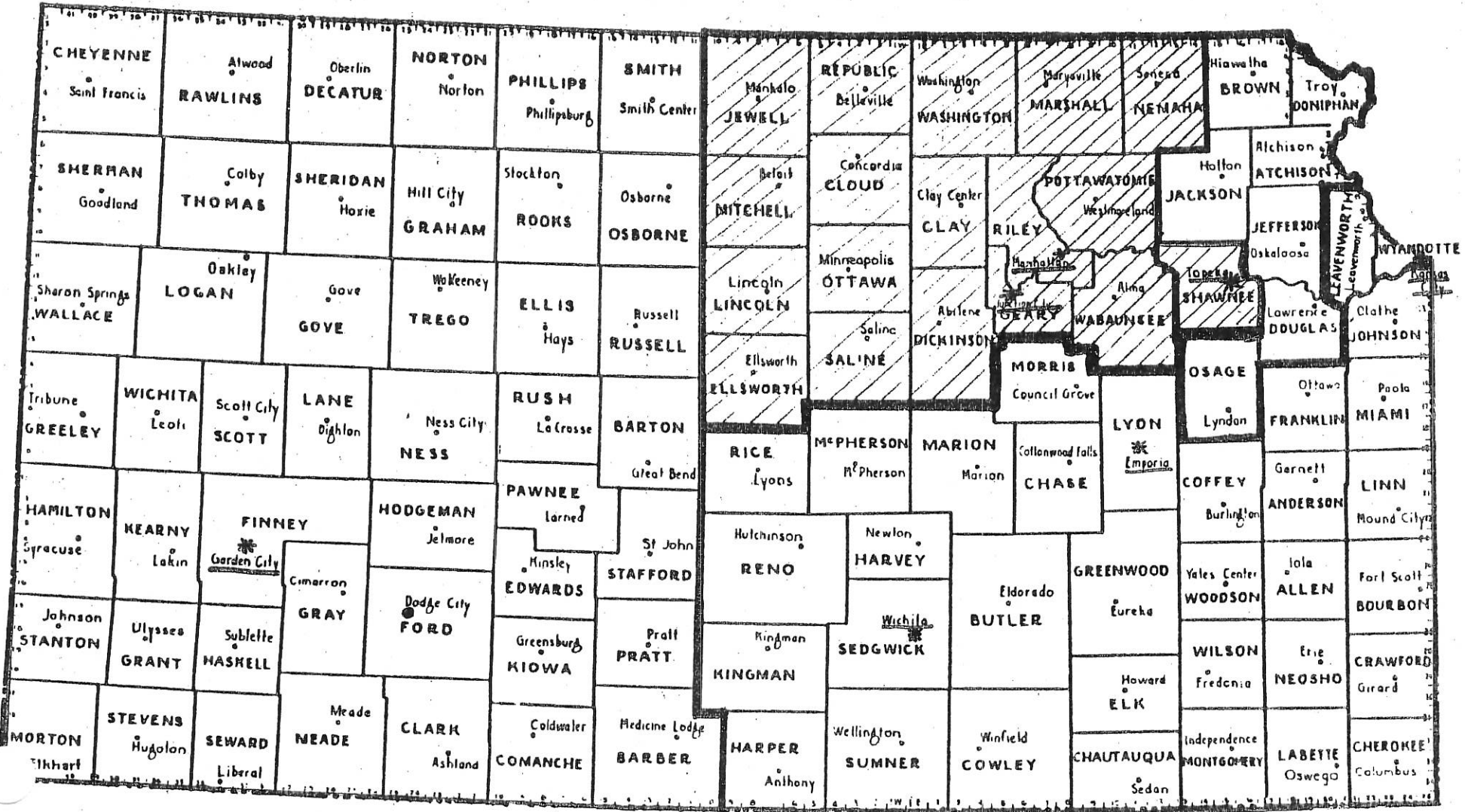
Robert Hartman, Executive Director, 316-942-4261, ext. 244 (Wichita)

Melissa Ness, Director of Advocacy & Education, 785 274-3100, ext. 404 (Topeka)

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Region 3



PRIVATIZATION ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Testimony before the Senate Ways and Means Committee
January 21, 1998

The Honorable Jennifer L Jones
18th Judicial District
Wichita, Kansas

SRS's decision to privatize foster care has significantly changed the entire system. The ripple effect from what might originally have been thought of as just a contract between a state agency and a private entity has been astounding. I don't believe anyone looked at the "big picture" when privatization became the plan.

Be that as it may, now that it has occurred, everyone involved in the child welfare system has been forced to deal with the effects of privatized foster care. I have reviewed the report from the Legislative Post Audit Committee and find it to be quite accurate in its findings, conclusions and recommendations. Let me assure you that if time permitted I could tell you of many "sensational" cases and incidences where the contractor has failed to adequately perform their duty. The time has come, however, for us to stop looking at the atrocities, which by the way, continue to occur, and focus on the root cause(s) of the problems.

In my estimation they are as follows:

A. Tremendous increase in number of children referred to the contractor.

Since SRS is no longer providing direct foster care services, their resources have concentrated on thorough investigation of

Senate Ways and Means Committee

Date 1/21/99
Attachment # 4

abused/neglected children. Logically, more investigations lead to more filing of cases, which leads to more children in the system. SRS has long been indicted for inadequate investigations and for children being left too long in bad situations. It is not uncommon for a case to be filed today where SRS has received numerous intakes on a particular family, however, no intervention was made on behalf of the child or children.

The single most important fact to remember is that we are talking about children and parents in crisis. They do not remain static or in a vacuum while this system goes on around them. You cannot concentrate just on the child or just on the parent. It is not realistic to think that case filings will/could stop because the system is in crisis – the reality is that children continue to be abused and neglected every day.

We are seeing an increase in older children, teenagers who are reporting abuse with marks and bruises to prove it, who are refusing to go home to be abused again. They are the products of the old system where cases were investigated and closed and the children not protected. We do not want to return to that system. The fact that SRS is doing a better job of investigating cases is a good thing, not to be negated by the fact that privatization has created a multitude of additional problems.

B. Lack of Quality Personnel and Inadequate Training

United Methodist Youthville continues to have a tremendous turnover of case managers-the front line workers who are responsible for providing the needed services. Only recently have those workers been required to be licensed social workers. As a result, many case managers who had finally learned how to do their jobs were forced to leave or be reassigned as family support workers, a position that many considered to be a demotion. Unfortunately, we lost some very good workers.

Attached as Appendix A is part of an actual court report submitted just this week illustrating the extent of this problem.

Why is the turnover so high? That is a question Youthville has yet to answer. From my observations and inquiries it is due to the lack of quality training programs prior to the case manager assuming the position. I recently spoke with some of those "good" workers who resigned instead of accepting a family support worker position. One shared that she had been on the job six (6) months before she finally felt that she knew what to do in order to be effective.

She, like many others, had no experience in child welfare or with the court system when she took the position. Because there was no formal training program in place and no direction from SRS, she basically had to figure out how to do things on her own. She further advised that she was on the job five (5) months before she had any

training on how to prepare a report for court and what information to include. When she left her position she spent the last week training her replacement who had just been hired.

"On the job training" is not the ideal method for managing families with serious, oftentimes chronic problems.

Quick burnout also seems to be a major problem. The original "model" Youthville envisioned, i.e. -- managing these cases from an interdisciplinary approach with small caseloads of no more than ten (10) cases on average, has not come to fruition. Due to the increase in cases filed and the high turnover, caseloads continue to fluctuate well above ten per worker. I am told many workers are putting in, on average, 60 - 70 hours per week. As a result, morale is low and although the workers want to do a good job, many tasks are not completed in a timely manner and sometimes not at all. Instead of administration providing the case managers with the needed support staff (adequately trained family support workers, transportation officers, typists, crisis intervention counselors) they continue to berate them because paperwork is not being kept up and children are not going home fast enough.

I know that it is not popular to "micro-manage" someone you have just hired to do a particular job, however, in this case it is imperative that SRS do just that. SRS must take on more responsibility for managing these children. After all, SRS is the one

who had requested these children be removed from their parents home and have asked the court to give them legal custody of the child(ren). As the legal custodian they must be held accountable for their actions--parents are.

C. Lack of foster homes, particularly therapeutic placements.

The post audit report enumerates in detail the problems in this area. Suffice it to say this continues to be a major problem.

Therapeutic foster homes are desperately needed in our area. Many children are being placed outside of Wichita for this reason. Distance from parents, siblings, and needed services only exacerbates the problems and further delays the reintegration process. Many therapeutic foster homes have been lost due to the lack of support and services needed by the foster parent in order to maintain a child needing this level of structure and care. Attendant care and respite care are vital services which are virtually non-existent.

As you know, foster parents are requested by statute to communicate in writing to the court at least once every six (6) months about the child(ren) in their care. Many continue to complain about the lack of contact with the Youthville workers supervising their cases, phone calls not being returned, the fact that they are expected to transport the children to therapy and to visits without having much to say so about it in advance and the difficulties involved in getting clothing vouchers pre-approved. Many are frustrated and are

threatening not to accept other children or to only do so as an emergency, temporary placement.

The State of Kansas would not expect the Secretary of the Department of Corrections to house and maintain criminals without supplying prisons, guards and other needed services so why should we expect any less for poor, abused and neglected children who have done no wrong; or foster parents who have opened their hearts and homes to them?

Privatization of foster care, coupled with the enactment of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) has greatly increased the demands on our court.

Due to the increase in the number of cases filed, more attorneys are needed to represent parents and children. In Sedgwick County we have contracted with nine (9) attorneys to represent parents on a part-time basis. Unfortunately, due to the volume of cases and three (3) judges handling these cases on a daily basis, these positions have turned into "full-time work for part-time pay." Consequently, we too have experienced a high degree of turnover. We have lost, and are continuing to lose good attorneys; attorneys committed to children and families, because they cannot afford to maintain a practice yet are in Juvenile Court every day.

We also have three (3) guardians ad litem on contract representing all of the children currently being served in Sedgwick

County (over 1000). How many children do you suppose they see if they are in court every day?

More case filings have also increased demands on the District Attorney's office, the Court Clerk's office, the Court Services Officers, and the community agencies that provide services to children and families; particularly in the mental health arena. Privatization's impact has trickled down to every part of the system and improvements will not be forthcoming unless we take a system-wide approach to solving the problems.

I am most appreciative of the Governor and Secretary Chronister's wisdom and insight into this approach. The additional funds given to the courts last fall to assist with the implementation of ASFA's requirements was a lifesaver to us. As a result, we were able to hire a pro-tem judge to handle all of the Juvenile Offender cases. This enabled myself and the other two District Court Judges to hear the ASFA cases, maintain regular review hearings of those cases that were already pending and still meet the challenges of the new cases filed on an almost daily basis. Had we not received that assistance I shudder to think of what shape we would be in by now; perhaps more importantly, what shape the children and families we serve?

Youthville has recently been quoted as saying that the courts have been the "bottleneck" in moving children through the system. Perhaps, therein lies the problem. I am not interested in just "moving

children through the system". I am looking for parents who can recognize mistakes they have made in the past and can now demonstrate changes in their behavior and parenting methods so that the same problem does not resurface as soon as the children are returned and the case is closed. I am looking for a service provider that is responsive to the needs of children and families in crises. I am looking for safe, permanent families for children.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support the recommendations of the Performance Audit Report and believe that their implementation is key to improving the foster care program for Kansas children. The other essential element is sufficient funding to other parts of the system which have been affected by privatizing foster care.

The creation of a "public defender type" office that provides legal representation to children or parents would also be of great benefit. If we can provide this service to indigent adults who have raped, beaten, murdered or in some manner victimized another human being, surely we can do the same for defenseless children and parents.

I was certainly pleased to hear the Governor's commitment to children during last week's "State of the State" address. I can only hope and pray that you too will join him in his efforts to improve the lives of Kansas children and families.

IV CASE SUMMARY:

- A. This case was received on 4/23/98 from Colleen Horner social worker SRS Wichita, Kansas.
- B. The children were taken into SRS custody due to chronic truancy issues.
- C. Attention should be given to the diagnosis of the mother [REDACTED] Substance Abuse.
- D. This case was transferred from UMY case manager Tara Person to Case Manager, Sheri Alexander on 8/21/98
- E. This case was transferred from UMY case manager Sherri Alexander. To case manager Dianna Todd on 12/1/98 after Ms. Alexander resigned Position.
- F. This case is currently been managed temporarily by Team # 30 Lead, David Osio because Ms. Todd has resigned her position.
- G. This case will be immediately assigned to a new case manager as soon as staff can be hired.

V. INFORMATION REGARDING PARENTS AND CHILDREN:

A. MOST RECENT COURT ORDERS: Journal Dated 9/17/98

(see section B. Outstanding orders).

B. OUTSTANDING ORDERS

Parent status:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]