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**MINUTES OF LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD**  
**Regular Meeting Held April 15, 2026**

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The regular meeting of the Lucas County Children Services Board was held at 301 Adams Street, 3:00 P.M., in person and via Zoom.

Members Present: Ms. Gagnon, Mr. Meyer, Rev. Dr. Perryman (Zoom), Mr. Ridi (Zoom), and Mr. Walrod.

Member(s) Absent: Mr. Corfman, Dr. Cowell, Ms. McCollough, and Ms. Vasquez

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**Note:** Ms. McCollough and Mr. Ridi were not available to chair the meeting, therefore Mr. Meyer volunteered to chair.

Mr. Meyer called April 15, 2026, regular meeting of the LCCS Board to order. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES**

- Ashley Houke - Training Unit
- Matalyn Cesarini- Training Unit
- Eric Walters – Training Unit
- Ziyaan Nurrudin – Records Clerk
- Francis Miller – Family Visits Monitor

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA AND MARCH LCCS BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

- Minutes from March 18, LCCS Board of Trustees Meeting
- Personnel Committee Minutes (4/26)
- Services & Programs (4/26)

Mr. Meyer asked if any items would be removed from the consent agenda. Hearing none, Mr. Meyer read the consent agenda into the minutes.

Mr. Meyer asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Walrod made a motion for approval, which Ms. Gagnon seconded. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Financial Updates**

Mr. Hoskins presented an overview of the most recent financial statements, accompanied by graphs that will be attached to these minutes.

Ms. Gagnon made a motion to accept the financials, and Mr. Walrod seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

## **Task Force**

Ms. Cully provided an update on the Task Force. The eight priorities are concluding, and five to six actionable items are expected for the recommendation report in June. The facilitator will compile these items into a report to be shared with relevant stakeholders. The public rollout is anticipated by June 30. Recommendations will be presented to leadership before public release. Mr. Meyer requested that if the report cannot be shared with the entire board, the Executive Director should at least have access. Ms. Cully confirmed that, depending on timing, the report will be presented to the board's executive officers.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Policy 1100 – Disproportionality Reduction, Respect and Engagement Policy**

Mr. Muth provided an overview of the latest revisions to Policy 1100. For additional information please see Executive Director Report below. The policy will now state:

*Lucas County Children Services (LCCS) affirms its ethical and professional responsibility to serve all children and families with dignity and fairness, while being aware of and responsive to differences in language, traditions, heritage, and community practices. This policy acknowledges the persistent pattern of some population groups appearing in the child welfare system at rates higher or lower than their share of the general population, including the higher system involvement of children of African descent and children with multi-heritage backgrounds.*

*Incorporating practices that welcome and respect individuals from a variety of professional experiences, personal histories, and community backgrounds is essential to achieving the mission of the agency and is a key part of our success. LCCS expects employees and caregivers to demonstrate professional awareness and responsiveness when working with families whose backgrounds or life experiences differ from their own.*

*LCCS is committed to maintaining a workplace culture where people from different personal and professional backgrounds can work productively together, feel respected in daily interactions, and have opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the agency's mission.*

*The agency will apply child welfare practices that consider the family's language, traditions, heritage, exposure to trauma, and community setting, and provides training and educational resources that prepare staff to deliver services in ways that are relevant and appropriate to the family's circumstances, as in accordance with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. LCCS has adopted and expects staff to follow the NASW Code of Ethics.*

### **Policy 493 – Agency Dress Code**

Mr. Muth reviewed the changes to Policy 493 – Agency Dress Code. For additional information please see Executive Director Report below. The updated policy statement is as follows:

*The purpose of this policy is to establish clear and consistent expectations for employee attire that promotes professionalism, safety, public trust, and respect for the families and children served by the Agency. This policy is designed to align with public-sector standards in Ohio while recognizing the practical realities of child welfare work, including field responsibilities and court involvement.*

## CHAIRS REPORT

- No chair report was given.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

### LCCS CHILD PLACEMENT STATISTICS:

|                          | Current Month | Previous Month |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Agency Foster Homes      | 265           | 256            |
| Subsidized Adoptions     | 1,064         | 1,066          |
| Purchased Boarding Homes | 248           | 247            |
| Institutions/Group Homes | 24            | 20             |
| Relative Placement       | 355           | 368            |

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACTIVITIES

This year's Child Memorial will be held this Thursday, April 16, at 11:00 am in the HCR ManorCare room (the large conference room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of our building by St. Clair entrance – where it was held last year). Toledo City Councilman John Hobbs, who is also the chair of its Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Committee, has agreed to be our keynote speaker.

### Dress Code Policy

In November of 2023, the Agency implemented a dress code policy which it had been working on for around a year. After two years of implementation, we realized that some revisions were necessary to reflect real-world application and evolving workplace needs. The Union articulated perceptions of unclear standards questioned the policy objective and alleged inconsistent enforcement. Employee feedback also suggested that we consider “dress-down days” which they stated would improve Agency morale and could enhance retention. Enhancements to the dress code policy were reviewed with the Programs and Services and Personnel committee and the below summary of amendments were deemed appropriate. Those amendments:

- Add clarity to certain areas of ambiguity (i.e. specifically states that skirts must be knee-length as opposed to the former general prohibition of “mini-skirts”)
- Strengthen the policy statement and purpose
- State that management will strive for consistent enforcement but absolute uniformity in enforcement may not always be possible due to the subject matter of this policy, the necessity for application of professional judgment, and human nature.
- Include standards for dress when the Director grants a “dress down” day

### DEIS Department and Policy

The evolving federal guidance (the latest being March 26), legal challenges, and political pressure have created a fast-moving and uncertain landscape for DEI programs here in Lucas County and across the county. It seems like every public and private agency has come to differing conclusions on what these

changes mean. However, after careful consideration, Administration recommends consideration of using the transitional language which was previously submitted last year.

These recommendations are not being put forward due to a belief that the substantive portions of the original proposed policy violate federal law. In fact, extensive review of the policy, federal executive orders and other federal guidance reveal that our policy objectives not only do not violate federal law, but, to a large part, are required by existing federal law. Rather, it is because the hyper politicization of these issues has inextricably linked traditional DEI terminology with favoritism, discrimination in reverse, forced training of concepts, and anti-meritocracy. In short, that language has become a generally divisive concept. To the point where we believe that if we continue to use words like diversity, equity, inclusion, implicit bias, and systemic racism, we may run the risk of the community misunderstanding our policies, intent and objectives. By continuing to use traditional DEI language, we may intend to communicate ideas which the majority of the public, as well as federal law would embrace if fully understood and articulated. However, we also run the risk that another portion of the community would assign the politicized meaning thus conveying an unintended and inaccurate message. This could detract from what DEI, as applied here, actually is - a conscious effort to ensure a sense of fairness, respect, belonging, and equal access to our services.

It is imperative that our DEIS initiatives remain both resilient and adaptable. Using the transitional language that is included in our revised proposed policy will allow us to thoughtfully communicate any necessary shifts in programming or priorities, while continuing to affirm our commitment to an accurate and lawful implementation of equity and inclusion concepts. This approach also enhances our ability to maintain transparency, build trust, and ensure that our values remain centered in light of the changing perception of traditional DEI terminology. By framing changes with intention and clarity, we can preserve momentum and uphold the integrity of our work during times of rapid change.

Therefore, the proposed **LCCS POLICY 1100 - Disproportionality Reduction, Respect and Engagement** incorporates:

- transitional language which was previously considered including changing the title from “DEIS Workplace Respect and Engagement” to “Disproportionality Reduction, Respect and Engagement”.
- Bifurcation of the original integrated 12-page policy and procedure document into a:
  - 3-page policy statement requiring Board approval
  - 13-page procedure manual which does not require Board approval

We have also:

- Changed the name of the “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Strategy department” to “Disproportionality Reduction, Training and Quality Assurance department.”
- Moved our Case Review unit from the Social Services Division to the new Disproportionality Reduction, Training and Quality Assurance department
- Moved the Family Help Center from the Legal Department to the new Disproportionality Reduction, Training and Quality Assurance department
- Amended the current job description for the Director of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Strategy department to:
  - change the name of the from Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Strategy department to “Director of Disproportionality Reduction, Training and Quality Assurance”

- incorporate the responsibilities of the Case Review and Family Help Center units into the job description of the new Disproportionality Reduction, Training and Quality Assurance department
- Mr. Muth acknowledges that Dr. Hope Bland has put in her retirement and her last day will be the end of May.

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**DONATIONS/PARTNERSHIPS**

More than 25 community partners participated in Wear Blue Day this year, taking photos and posting them to social media with positive messages about the entire community's role in helping LCCS to protect children. The large number of partners speaks

well to current community relations efforts.

The Child Memorial takes place Thursday April 16, 11 a.m., here at LCCS. Toledo City Councilman Joh Hobbs III is keynote speaker. The event will feature a Toledo Symphony Quartet, original poetry read by an LCCS supervisor, and remember ten children whose lives were lost in 2025.

LCCS and YWCA are teaming up for a Chalk the Walk event for Child Abuse Prevention Month. Youth will decorate public sidewalks outside both agencies April 21 with positive messages and kid artwork.

Friends of LCCS is funding a Fatherhood Week outing at a Mud Hens game Sunday, June 14, for Level 3 fathers to spend a day at the ballpark with their kids. The date was chosen because kids can run the bases and the Mud Hens have a special Backyard Baseball day of kid-related activities.

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**IN THE MEDIA**

|                                 |                                                                |            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Toledo Blade</i> , blade.com | Child Wellness Campus                                          | 3-12-26    |
| WTOL 11, wtol.com               | Wear Blue Day preview                                          | 3-22-26    |
| WSPD-AM1370                     | Wear Blue Day preview<br>(Kevin Milliken in-studio interview)  | 4-6-26     |
| WTOL 11, wtol.com               | Wear Blue Day preview<br>(Kevin Milliken in-studio interviews) | 4-6 & 7-26 |
| <i>Toledo Blade</i> , blade.com | Child Abuse Prevention Month events                            | 4-6-26     |

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- There was no need for Executive Session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Gagnon  
 Mr. Walrod seconded the motion.  
 The meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy Meyer  
Board Secretary