

# **Supreme Court Commission on Children in the Courts**

Summary of June 25, 2010 Meeting

Present: Co-Chair Judge Douglas Johnson, Judge Vernon Daniels, Judge Curtis Evans, Judge Lawrence Gendler, Judge Anne Paine, Judge Randin Roland, Judge Patrick Runge, Judge Linda Senff, Stacey Trout (for Sen. Brad Ashford), Lynnette Boyle, Ellen Brokofsky, Christine Costantakos, Robert Goodwin, Thomas Harmon, Sarah Helvey, Franceska Cassell (for Sen. Gwen Howard), Gwen Hurst-Anderson, Carole McMahon-Boies, David Pantos, Todd Reckling, Richard Stafford, Carolyn Stitt, Janice Walker, and Vicky Weisz

## **Bench/Bar Card Project**

The Court Improvement Project would like to develop Bench/Bar Cards for various 3a hearings that provide the relevant state and federal statutory and case law, state required findings, and provide best practice recommendations. The Commission discussed and provided support for this project. There were several concrete suggestions made regarding the Protective Custody Bench/Bar Card that was presented for illustration. The Commission will review other cards as they are developed.

## **Legislative Study – Guardian ad Litem**

Tina Marroquin presented a brief overview of the *Evaluation of the Guardian ad Litem System in Nebraska* conducted by the National Association of Counsel for Children. There was considerable discussion as to whether the expected improvements following the institution of GAL training requirements and the Guidelines have happened. It was decided to re-institute the GAL subcommittee to carefully review the legislative study and bring potential recommendations to the Commission. Several Commission members volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

## **Legislative Study- Juvenile Defenders**

Tina Marroquin also presented a brief overview of *Juvenile Legal Defense: A Report on Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation for Children in Nebraska* conducted by the National Juvenile Defender Center. There was considerable discussion of this report and whether this subcommittee should be instituted as well, particularly regarding the issue of excessive waivers of counsel. It was decided that if enough members volunteered for a subcommittee, one would be formed. Only one Commission member volunteered.

## **Immigration Subcommittee**

Judge Patrick Runge reported that the subcommittee has provided training on immigration issues in juvenile court and that it sought further direction from the Commission. It was recommended that the Subcommittee work on developing easy,

usable materials that could be used by judges and attorneys when immigration issues emerge.

### **Tribal and State Court Collaborations Subcommittee**

A new subcommittee is created to try to improve tribal and state court collaborations in Nebraska. Judge James Orr will chair this subcommittee. Commission members volunteered to participate.

### **Collaborative Practices in Child Welfare Subcommittee**

A new subcommittee is created to explore implementation and consistency issues with a wide range of collaborative practices that are being used across the state. Commission members volunteered to participate.

### **Report of Subcommittee on Delinquency Guidelines**

The Commission discussed the subcommittee recommendations regarding the Disposition section of the guidelines and after recommending several changes voted to forward these, along with the recommendations for Detention and Adjudication on to the Supreme Court.