

State of New Mexico

CHILDREN, YOUTH and FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
GOVERNOR

HOWIE MORALES
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



Teresa Casados
CABINET SECRETARY

September 12, 2023

Shelly Bucher, LMSW
SCAC Program Director
PO Box 3204
Mesilla Park, NM 88047

Dear Ms. Bucher,

Thank you for providing CYFD with the Substitute Care Advisory Council (SCAC) CYFD Discharge of Child Protection Responsibilities dated July 2020 through December 2023. The Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) appreciates your dedication and the Council's dedication to the children and families of New Mexico. I have reviewed your report and appreciate the efforts of the Council in carefully reviewing cases and making recommendations to improve timely permanency and increase positive safety and well-being outcomes for children and youth in foster care.

Regarding the Council's recommendations, I would like to suggest setting up quarterly meetings with the CYFD Policy Director and staff from the CYFD Office of Performance and Accountability Division. I believe regular quarterly meetings could improve communication between CYFD and the Council and address concerns or questions in a timelier manner instead of waiting for a year end response to recommendations. I am confident we can work together on establishing protocols around information sharing and becoming more inclusive with each other in achieving a shared goal of improving services children and families involved in New Mexico's foster care system. This format could also provide opportunities to discuss needed amendments to the current Joint Powers Agreement, any case review questions, as well as discuss opportunities for collaboration on data collection and system improvement.

The Council's recommendations regarding oversight of psychotropic medications, notification of placement changes, and improved collaboration with the Public Education Department (PED) to ensure the Best Interest changes in school settings meet state and federal requirements are good starting points for future quarterly collaboration. I would also like to discuss if issuing bi-annual reports instead of annual reports will meet the federal regulations in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

Please reach out to me to set up some time to discuss the possibility of quarterly meetings and how our two entities can work together to make system improvement and change. Please email me at Sarah.Meadows@cyfd.nm.gov or call me at (505) 469-7156. Thank you for your time and effort serving the children, youth, and families of New Mexico.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Meadows".

Sarah Meadows
Director of Office of Performance and Accountability
New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department