

# WA Blue Ribbon Commission

## Initial Proposal - Report/Recommendations Outline

*\*Note: This is organized to support describing the flow of the report; major report sections are highlighted in **BOLD***

### Frame of the Report:

- Anchor in the deliverables in the Executive Order
- Emphasize the Commission prioritizing prevention, early intervention and improving outcomes
- Elevate the voices of consumers
- Utilize visuals as a tool
- Build on ideas, such as Mel Tonasket’s description of the “community holding a child’s hand”, to connect to the shared hopes around this significant opportunity for change
- Have the report read as a narrative that clearly articulates the process, recommendations, essential elements, and considerations, aligned with the Executive Order, that also emphasizes the humanity of this effort focused on addressing the needs of children, families, and communities

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- 1) Executive Summary** (will function as a stand-alone, high-level summary of the BRC’s recommendations)
  - 2) Overview**
    - a) Background – Executive Order, prior efforts
    - b) Process – Commission formation, BRC meetings, mobilization of work groups, high-level summary of the BRC’s work over the 6 months
    - c) Who we have heard from and what we have learned – stakeholder/key informant insight (themes at a high level)
    - d) Highlight the unique time and opportunity
    - e) Framing the content of the report/recommendations
  - 3) How are children doing?- Child Welfare/Well-Being Landscape** (key data re: the state’s children, youth, and families, from Dr. Mancuso’s presentations and other sources of recent WA data around key indicators)
  - 4) Guiding Principles** (discuss their development, identify and define the principles, describe how they have shaped the process/recommendations)
  - 5) Rationale for the Recommendations** (science-based system focused on the delivery of services for children and their families)
    - a) Prioritizing prevention, early intervention and improved outcomes
    - b) The importance of early childhood development/brain science
    - c) The importance of connecting early childhood development and child welfare
      1. Child welfare is a prevention system.
      2. Children and families interact with various systems beyond child welfare.
      3. Including child welfare serves to destigmatize child welfare/child protection.
      4. Serving all ages optimally supports positive brain development at all stages of a child/youth’s development.

5. There are advantages to leveraging the Department of Early Learning (structure, focus on prevention, business enterprise, current connection to Executive Cabinet).
- d) Importance of alignment and integration across agencies serving children and families
- e) What stakeholders and key informants had to say about making a change (detail from the stakeholder/key informant input—including highlights from other states making similar transitions and other key learnings from other states, identified unmet needs or opportunities to reform from consumers and other stakeholders, interest in more of a prevention focus)
- f) Singular focus on children and families while simultaneously making DSHS a smaller, more manageable agency
- g) What's at stake if no change occurs

## 6) Recommendations (aligned with the Executive Order deliverables)

- a) **A clear mission and vision for the new organization** (describe the purpose of the agency and the respective theory of change)

1. Vision/Mission

### ***Vision***

*Washington's children grow up safe and healthy, thriving physically, emotionally and educationally, nurtured by family and supported by community.*

### ***Mission***

*In partnership with state and local agencies, tribes and communities, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families supports equitable and optimal development of children from birth to adulthood, including high quality prevention, intervention and early education services that promote child and family safety and well-being.*

2. Target population (*servicing children and youth ages 0-21, Medicaid eligible, with certain risk factors*)
3. Desired outcomes (high-level)
4. Service approach (high-level) (*aligned with the Guiding Principles around prevention and intervention*)
5. Addressing equity/disproportionality/disparities (high-level)
6. Structure (high-level)
7. Essential Elements (examples)
  - (1) Transitional period needed
  - (2) Considerations around agency culture
  - (3) Ensuring adequate funding
  - (4) Business enterprise considerations
  - (5) Alignment and integration requirement across agencies serving children and families
  - (6) Appropriately addressing the needs of tribes and considerations around tribal sovereignty

- b) **New organizational structure, including recommendations on which agencies, administrations, commissions, or other functions of state government should be included within the new department**

1. Describe anchors in the new department
  - (1) Highlight benefits of this new structure referencing back to the rationale and key stakeholder input
  - (2) Highlight the significance of making major reform with this opportunity

- (3) Identify importance, in the transition, of addressing issues that are problem areas/areas for development to mitigate transitioning those problem areas into the new department – Example: outcome areas that are lagging, caseload size, staff classifications, other workforce issues, etc. (*implementation considerations later in the report will emphasize strategies for assessing, identifying, and addressing problem areas*)
  2. Describe structural shifts
    - (1) Programs/services in the new department, including highlighting the criteria for determining which programs and services are in and out of the new department
    - (2) Detail alignment and integration from the framework developed by the alignment work group (detail first-tier and second-tier alignment and other considerations re: alignment)
  3. Essential Elements (examples)
    - (1) Transitional period needed
    - (2) Considerations around making these shifts both for those agencies, programs, services, and staff moving into the new department and for those that are not
    - (3) Appropriately addressing the needs of tribes and considerations around tribal sovereignty
- c) Estimated costs for the reorganization – including IT and capital**
1. Recommendations about costs from the work of the fiscal/business work group and the data/IT work group, reviewed/approved by the BRC
  2. Important to differentiate between what we know and what we don't know about costs for these recommendations and what that means for budgeting and transition decision-making
  3. Essential Elements (examples)
    - (1) Transitional processes needed
    - (2) Ensuring adequate funding and expertise/competency for both the fiscal and technology processes
    - (3) State budget considerations (timing, decisions needed to support budgeting process, etc.)
    - (4) Importance of addressing any issues around contracted services, partnerships, other elements with costs that may impact the transition if those costs are NOT state costs
- d) A clear process for managing the reorganization, including the involvement of regional management and case-carrying staff**
1. Specific proposal about the transition
    - (1) Led by transition team in the Governor's shop
    - (2) Integrate Program Optimization work group's recommendations associated with the transition process
    - (3) Discuss what will occur in the day-to-day operations of CA and DEL in the transition
    - (4) Discuss the ideal timeframe that would support an effective transition
    - (5) Other areas to highlight – internal and external communication, transition logistics, process for mitigating service disruption, engagement of regional management and line staff in process, what has to be coupled or uncoupled to make this transition work
  2. Essential Elements (examples)
    - (1) Critical need for adequate time to make the transition
    - (2) Ensuring adequate funding for the transition
    - (3) Allowing for additional analysis of specific BRC decisions/recommendations for refinement to ensure optimal conditions once children/families begin being served (*will also be highlighted in implementation considerations later in the report*)
    - (4) Appropriately addressing the needs of tribes and considerations around tribal sovereignty

- e) Measureable benchmarks by which the effectiveness of the new children and families department would be assessed**
- i) Build on BRC discussion about benchmarks associated with Guiding Principles, and name key benchmarks
  - ii) If appropriate, lift up stakeholder/key informant insight that identifies areas of accountability for this new department that translate to benchmarks
  - iii) Identify outward-facing benchmarks and inward-facing/internal benchmarks associated with agency functioning (examples caseload size, staff retention, etc.)
  - iv) Essential Elements (examples)
    - (1) Need for adequate funding for technology to track and measure these identified benchmarks and competency/staffing to analyze and utilize the data
    - (2) Importance of a structure of accountability and CQI

**7) Specific Considerations Related to Tribes**

- a) Emphasize items that were highlighted in the recommendations, with a focus on recognizing tribal sovereignty and existing agreements with tribes
- b) Recommend consultation of the transition team with the Office of Indian Policy
- c) Identify priority steps to be taken by the transition team and new department leadership to explore:
  - i) 7.01 tribal consultation needs for this transition
  - ii) MOUs being developed with tribes
  - iii) Other actions that align with the state's Indian Policy

**8) Implementation Considerations**

- a) Overarching Essential Elements
  - i) Reference any non-negotiables associated with this transition, without which this shift will not be successful
    - (1) Examples
      - (a) Adequate funding
      - (b) Adequate time to support an effective transition
- b) Priority Implementation Considerations
  - i) Detail staging and phases of implementation and other considerations that are important for the Governor, legislature, transition team, and new leadership to consider (consulting team drawing from the BRC discussions, stakeholder and key informant insight, and their expertise)
- c) Operational Considerations
  - i) Detail operational considerations that need to be prioritized in the transition and lessons learned to avoid challenges that other states have faced in these types of transitions that are important for the Governor, legislature, transition team and new leadership to consider (consulting team drawing from the BRC discussions, stakeholder and key informant insight, and their expertise)

**9) Conclusion**

- 10) Appendices** (Executive Order, Commissioner bios, detail re: BRC meetings, stakeholder feedback detail re: methodology and themes (if not already highlighted in other parts of the report), work group documents – for example, alignment and integration framework, etc.)