

2021

ANNUAL REPORT



OKLAHOMA
COMMISSION ON
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

POST ADJUDICATION
REVIEW BOARDS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FROM THE MANAGER'S DESK	3
2021 FINDINGS AND BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS	4
2021 LOCAL PARB ANNUAL REPORTING	5
2021 LOCAL PARB RESPONSES	6 - 7
PARB MEMBERSHIP STUDY	8
COUNTY REVIEW REPORT	9
NEW PARB DATA BASE AND THE 2022 PARB MAP	9

FROM THE MANAGER'S DESK

"So, what is a PARB anyway?" I am sure a lot of you have heard this question before or are asking it to yourself right now. I always say, "The Post Adjudication Review Boards are a group of over 300 volunteers across the state that meet regularly, in groups, to support, protect and monitor the juvenile court system in Oklahoma by reviewing active juvenile court cases and making recommendations to the Judge and child welfare."

I travel the state and see these efforts firsthand. Judges and child welfare staff share with me how PARB members often validate their current efforts and give them new ideas to pursue and address. PARB members work diligently to ensure that every effort is brought to bear on every case. In this way, the juvenile court system is supported and protected. At the same time, all court partners are aware that PARBs are monitoring current practices and ensuring that children and families are not forgotten while in state custody. Through their recommendations, PARBs highlight both common sense and complex issues for the court. These issues can include concerns over visitation, individual service plans, or suggestions on where to find needed resources in the community.

This annual report is PARB's once-a-year opportunity to raise juvenile court system concerns to the Commissioners of the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth and to highlight issues to the public and child advocates across the state. This report will also take the opportunity to brag about our volunteers' efforts and share the overall direction of the PARB program, including what accomplishments were made in 2021 and where PARB is headed.



Keith Pirtle, Program Manager



Christina Whatley, Oklahoma County Coordinator

**Not Pictured: Kim Rebasmen, Tulsa County Coordinator.

STATE PARB FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

The State Post Adjudication Review Advisory Board recommends to the Commissioners of the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth that the following issues be adopted and addressed.

- 1. Eliminate the right to request a jury trial in the termination of parental rights procedures.

State PARB, based on its experience in the deprived court system, sees the right to a jury trial in the termination of parental rights as an unnecessary barrier to timely permanence of children in foster care in Oklahoma. The State PARB recommends the Commission support legislation regarding this issue.

- 2. Reduce the number of kids who turn 18 while in DHS custody without the connections and resources to function in society.

In Oklahoma, 150 to 200 youth per year turn 18 and become legal adults while in the care of DHS. Many of these youth lack critical independent living skills, appropriate housing, and employment. These young adults also often lack legal documents that would help them function independently, such as a driver's license or social security card. The State PARB recommends the Commission support programs, policies and legislation to address these services for youth.

- 3. Support the spirit of HB 3190 that sought to hold children's attorneys accountable in deprived cases, through sanctions, that do not provide the minimum of representative services to their assigned clients. In addition, HB 3190 provided that the demand for a jury trial in a termination of parental rights cases must be filed no later than 30 days prior to the date set for initial hearing. It also required that reunification services, as appropriate, be part of the individualized service plan during the first 15 months of the child being in care. If, after that time, the parent has not corrected the issues that brought the child into care, the district attorney is required to file a petition for termination.

The State PARB intends to spend additional time researching the issue of legal representation of children in deprived cases to understand the scope of the problem and develop strategies to address the issue. However, the poor representation of juveniles in deprived cases has been well documented in Oklahoma for decades. The need to reduce jury trials in the termination of parental rights cases and the need for timely termination, are also well documented.

2021 LOCAL PARB ANNUAL REPORTING

Each calendar year, local PARBS submit their activities. Information reported includes the number of cases reviewed, volunteer hours contributed for the year, etc. Annual reporting allows PARB Staff to comply with federal funding requests, know if PARB is growing or shrinking, and quantify the great work local PARBs accomplish during a year.

2021

PARBs that Reviewed 100% of Deprived Cases	19
Judicial Districts Served	25
Delinquent Cases Reviewed	129
PARB Volunteers	287
PARB Members that Attended Training	363
Deprived Cases Reviewed	3,581
Children Involved in Cases Reviewed	5,344
Volunteer Hours Reported	7,277



2021 PARB ANNUAL REPORT LOCAL BOARD RESPONSES

In addition to reporting their numbers each year, we ask each PARB some open-ended questions to gather qualitative information such as how PARB members are doing and how state PARB staff are doing in supporting them. We very much appreciate the work and commitment of each PARB member and value their input. Following is the list of questions along with highlights of their responses to our questions.

What systemic issues, concerns or barriers should be addressed in the children's justice system?

1. The State PARB should work to remove PARB from the open meeting act requirements.
2. It would be great for individual PARB volunteers to have access to the Oklahoma Court Information System.
3. There needs to be better housing options for low-income families and transitional age youth.
4. There is a lack of resources and supports for parents with cognitive disabilities.
5. We think that confirmed sexual abuse cases should be followed through with criminal charges.
6. DHS/CW supervisors and workers need more training to understand what PARB is and does, that we are not there to criticize, but to try and help them in their capacity to help children.
7. DHS employee turnover and knowledge is creating a huge barrier to success in cases.
8. Lack of recruitment and training for foster homes willing to specialize in teens.
9. DHS workers do not have adequate Oklahoma Successful Adult Program (OKSA) knowledge.

How can the State PARB, State PARB staff and the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) assist the local PARBs?

1. OCCY has met the standards of providing training on many topics.
2. The state PARB staff is ALWAYS so helpful and supportive. No better staff support could be needed by our board. Communication is prompt and questions answered in a timely way.
3. We hope that PARB staff will continue to work with and stay involved in the new Tulsa County Indian Child Welfare Act court process.
4. PARB staff need to explore consistency in processes across the state and across boards. Support and training would be easier to obtain if all boards worked similarly.
5. It would be great if PARB worked with foster care agencies to provide additional information on the court process and ways to increase foster parent involvement.
6. We appreciate the new online system especially now that we are able to see previous reviews.



What areas of training would benefit the boards?

1. Educational laws and supports for children in custody.
2. Understanding of different board functions when it comes to transitional youth Oklahoma Successful Adult Program (OKSA) services.
3. We would like training on McGirt and the impact it has on child welfare cases.
4. Specific training on what recommendations should include.
5. Training of how to identify DHS safety concerns.
6. It would be nice to have additional training on working with the Tribes and the Indian Child Welfare Act.
7. Any and all training on community resources that are available to parents and foster parents is appreciated.

What barriers do PARBs experience in trying to accomplish their work?

1. The COVID pandemic continued to create barriers in 2021 by not allowing us to meet in person or at the Courthouse.
2. We wish there was a way to meet virtually in case of illness.
3. We do not have access to WIFI in the Courthouse which makes it difficult to use the new PARB data system.
4. Input from 3rd parties, such as CASA or foster parents, is essential, but there is little participation.
5. Right now our biggest hurdle is finding qualified people to add to our board.

PARB MEMBERSHIP STUDY

Not only was the PARB database kicked off in the fall of 2021, but two PARB studies were also conducted and finalized by the University of Oklahoma Educational Training, Evaluation, Assessment, and Measurement (E-TEAM) in 2021. The first report looked at PARB membership characteristics. The second report analyzed PARB recommendations for 2019 in Garfield and Oklahoma Counties. Final copies of the reports are available.

PARB Membership Study

In May of 2021, there were 342 PARB members that were a part of the membership study. These 342 members had served on average for 9 years. The vast majority of PARB members in 2021 were female (78%), white (67%), and between the ages of 40 and 65. Though PARB members come from several different professional backgrounds, the highest percentage currently reported themselves as retired. The total number of all minority PARB members combined represented only 10% of those serving on boards.

PARB MEMBERSHIP STUDY RESULTS

Total number of Members Reporting gender	323	
Male	70	22%
Female	253	78%

Total number of members reporting age	281	
Over 40	231	82%
Under 40	50	18%

Total number of members reporting race	343	
White	230	67%
Black/African American	20	6%
American Indian	13	4%
Hispanic	4	1%
Other/Unknown	76	22%

This 2021 data affirmed that PARB volunteers had been serving for quite some time and that outreach needs to be done to recruit new volunteers, especially young people, men, and minorities. This recruitment will not only help sustain PARB's volunteer pool, but also ensure that all perspectives are considered during the case reviews, which is essential to the work. As a result of this study, future marketing and outreach efforts will target younger and more diverse volunteers.



COUNTY REVIEW REPORT

The Garfield County PARB completed 278 reviews in 2019. Oklahoma County completed 274 reviews in 2019. All aspects of these case reviews were analyzed and aggregated to better understand what information is collected, how these urban and rural counties differ and what themes or categories these recommendations typically fall under.

As a result of this report, recommendation categories were created that informed the categories used in the new PARB data system and listed below.

COUNTY CASE REVIEWS

Number of Times a Case was Reviewed	Garfield	Oklahoma
Once	54	161
Twice	34	36
3 times	29	11
4 times	11	2
5 times	5	0

- Placement
- Mental Health Services
- Parental Rights and Supports
- Visitation-Sibling
- Visitation-Parental
- Community Resources
- Tribal Supports
- Educational Supports
- Healthcare Services
- Individual Service Plan (ISP) for parents
- Individual Service Plan (ISP) for children
- Assignment of Worker/Advocate
- ICWA Findings
- Active Efforts
- Reasonable Efforts
- Permanency Plan

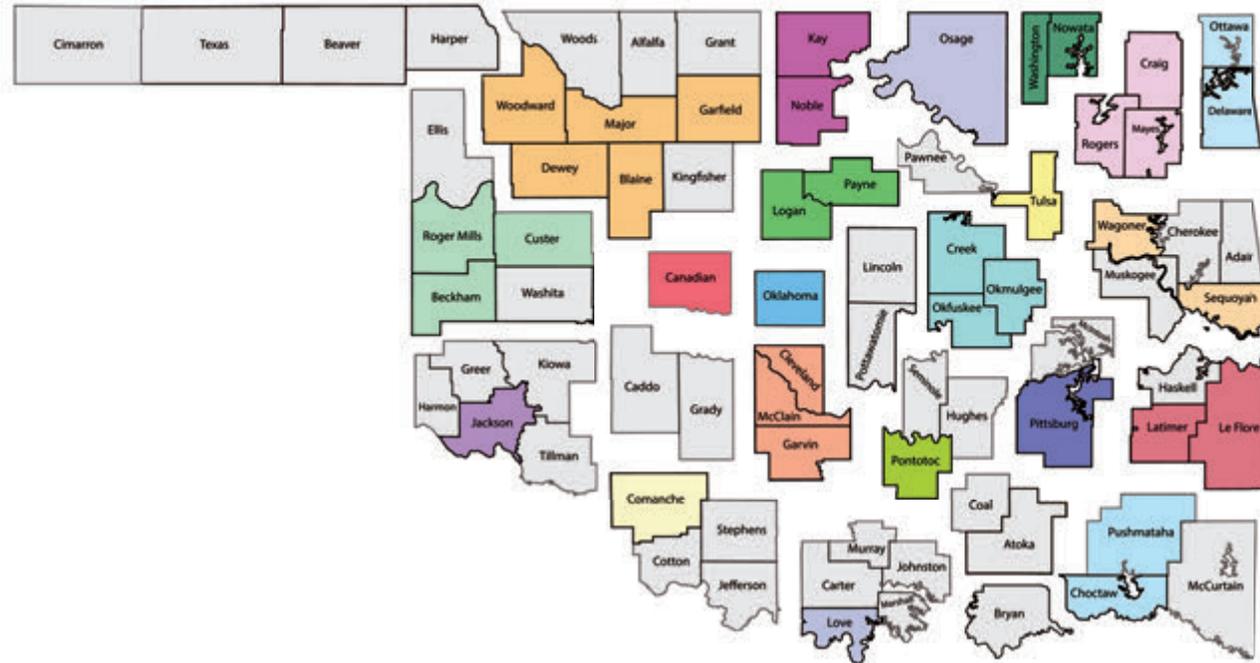
NEW PARB DATABASE

During the entire 40-year history of PARBs, members have used paper forms to write and submit their recommendations. As a result, data from these recommendations have never been captured electronically. This paper-only system had made it impossible to study the quality of recommendations and easily compare one recommendation, county, or year to another.

The new system and database is in the process of being adopted, county by county, across Oklahoma. The transition has been challenging, but most PARB volunteers love the new format. PARB members have found it is easier to capture recommendations by typing them rather than handwriting them. Members can also easily see old recommendations, so they do not have to reenter old demographic data on cases that have been reviewed before. PARB staff love the new system because it allows for real-time quality assurance. It also allows PARB staff to provide direct training and technical assistance where needed.

We hope by the middle of 2022, all PARBs will be using the new electronic system. Once it has been adopted by all existing PARBs, it will be possible to gather statewide PARB information and generate reports.

2022 PARB MAP



**As of May 19, 2022



2915 N. Classen Boulevard, Suite 300
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106
(405) 606-4900

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