



# Michigan Foster Care Review Board Program

2022 Annual Report



Child Welfare Services  
State Court Administrative Office  
Michigan Supreme Court

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Foster Care Review Board is to engage citizen volunteers to review and evaluate permanency planning processes and outcomes for children and families in the Michigan foster care system. Based on the data collected through case review, the Foster Care Review Board advocates for systemic improvements in areas of child safety, timely permanency, and family and child well-being.

**VISION STATEMENT**

The Foster Care Review Board will be viewed and valued by the courts, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, private child-placing agencies, the legislature, tribes, and the citizens of Michigan as a credible source of information and data on the performance of the child welfare system. In addition, citizens of the state will use the data to shape public policy and promote awareness regarding Michigan’s foster care system.

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## Background and Purpose

The Michigan Legislature created the Foster Care Review Boards Act in 1984 (MCL 722.131-140) as a means to ensure additional oversight of child protective proceedings, with the goal of promoting safety and well-being in the foster care system, and to help cases progress towards timely permanency.

The Act requires the Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) to provide independent third-party review of foster care cases. The FCRB also hears appeals by foster parents who believe that children are being unnecessarily moved from their care. The FCRB program includes 12 regional boards and is housed within the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) in an effort to support juvenile courts in fulfilling their responsibility of monitoring the care and supervision of children placed into foster care, as well as the agency's efforts to ensure safe, permanent homes for children as quickly as possible.

SCAO establishes the program's framework, including uniform policies and procedures, criteria for the selection of cases to be reviewed, and local citizen review board membership recruitment and training. In addition, SCAO maintains a statewide advisory committee to assess needs within the foster care system and make recommendations to address those needs. Recommendations are published in this annual report to the public, the legislature, and the governor.

## Annual Report Requirements

MCL 722.139 requires the State Court Administrative Office to publish an annual report of the FCRB program that includes all of the following information:

- A summary, with applicable quantitative data, of the activities and functioning of each local review board.
- A summary, with applicable quantitative data, of the activities and functioning of the aggregate of all local review boards.
- An identification of problems that impede the timely placement of children in permanent placements, and recommendations for improving the timely placement of children in permanent placements.
- The statistics and findings regarding its reviews of permanent wards, and identification of any barriers to permanency.

**Note from Justices Megan Cavanagh and Kyra Harris Bolden,  
Liaison Justices to Child Welfare Services**



We are here to support the crucial work of the Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) program across the state and the work of trial courts regarding child welfare matters. That is why we are so gratified to learn that interest in serving on these boards continues to grow, as evidenced by the 10 new volunteers who joined boards in 2022.

We applaud all FCRB program staff and volunteers, past and present—particularly those with “lived experience” because it takes great strength and passion to step up for the benefit of the many children who continue to follow you into the system. Your experience is not only appreciated, but it is needed and valued because you bring a unique perspective to the review process.

This report includes the numbers, statistics, and scope of work conducted by board members and program staff throughout 2022. One remarkable takeaway is that board members provided a combined 2,173 consultative recommendations to courts and agencies during the case reviews and foster parent appeals in 2022. In addition, board members reviewed 227 foster care cases involving 412 children and 86 foster parent appeal investigations.

The impact of the program is hard to capture through data alone, so at the end of the report, you will see quotes from individuals who expressed appreciation after participating in an FCRB meeting.

We are proud to carry these successes forward into 2023 and look forward to helping even more children and strengthening more families across Michigan.

Handwritten signature of Megan Cavanagh in blue ink.

Megan Cavanagh  
Justice

Handwritten signature of Kyra Harris Bolden in blue ink.

Kyra Bolden  
Justice

## FCRB Board Members

The State Court Administrative Office would like to express its gratitude to the volunteer board members and Advisory Committee members from throughout the state for their time and dedication in helping to ensure that children are safe and well cared for while in the state foster care system, and that their cases continuously move towards permanency in a timely manner. As shown in the chart below, 31 of the 75 board members have volunteered for the FCRB program for at least 10 years or longer. (\*board member resigned in 2022)

Region 1	Year Joined	Region 2	Year Joined	Region 3	Year Joined
Emily Barrett	2022	Dana Bennett*	2021	Brenda Battle	2022
Brenda Boyd	1990	Fonda Brewer*	2017	Colin Buell	2011
Katrina M. Dixon	2001	Diane Dugan	2021	Ginger Coleman	2021
George Eason	2002	Thye Fischman	2021	James Goodwin*	2021
Michael Eberth	2001	Rika Gaylord	2019	Lisa Wyatt-Knowlton	2022
Michael Greene	2013	Jackie Igafo-Te'O	2021	Gary Madden	2006
Carolyn Harris-Render	2022	Mark Jackson	2021	Sharon Norman	2022
Darryl Hunter	2001	Susan Marlin-Zeisler	2022	Shirley Norman	2005
Darryl Lewis*	2011	Laura Myers	2022	Mark Perkins	2022
Marie Lumpkin	2022	Janet Olsen	2016	Frederick Puffenberger	2005
Lashawna Morman	2016	Egypt Otis	2021	Kelly Schafer	2021
Cameasha Muhammad	2019	Darshelle Pierce	2020		
Elizabeth Oliver	1988	Stephanie Williams	2007		
Paul Smith	2021				
Rita Smythe	2009				
Region 4	Year Joined	Region 5	Year Joined	Region 6	Year Joined
George Botbyl*	2021	Jan Foxen	2004	Lorette Adams	2019
Marcia Jablonski	2016	Merrill Graham	2016	Lynn Aronoff	2019
Michael Mondoskin	2021	Meryl Greene	2008	Mabel Boshoff	2019
Carol Morse	2019	Daniel Groce	1995	John Dodge	2019
Barbara Russ	2013	Regina Jones	2021	Robert Goldenbogen	2000
Elizabeth Storm	2021	Kelley Kellis	2021	Eugene Groesbeck	2000
Shannon Taylor	2021	Brandon Nichols	2021	Monica Hunt	2019
Mary Weyand	2019	Renee Orr	2019	Misti Rice	2021
Glenn Wing	2007	Mary Roberts	2020	Rosemary Sear	2006
Kim Wing	2019	Lisa Rodriguez	2012	Ranya Shbeib	2021
		Tina Ryznar	2021	Shelley Vallier*	2019
		Dennis Schaaf	2009	Jerry Webb	2013
		Lucinda Wakeman	2005		
		Ineke Way	2022		

## FCRB Advisory Committee

MCL 722.133 requires SCAO to maintain a statewide advisory committee consisting of representatives from child care organizations, local boards, and other child welfare stakeholders to review the needs of the foster care system and to make recommendations to the appropriate groups and agencies.

Name	Title	Organization
Dana Bennett	Ingham County	FCRB Region 2 Board Member
Lara Bouse	Co-President	Fostering Forward Michigan
Hon. Karen Braxton	Circuit Court Judge	3rd Judicial Circuit Court, Family Division
George Eason	Wayne County	FCRB Region 1 Board Member
Michael Eberth	Wayne County	FCRB Region 1 Board Member
Jan Foxen	Kent County	FCRB Region 5 Board Member
Rika Gaylord	Livingston County	FCRB Region 2 Board Member
Sarah Goad	Foster Care Program Manager	MDHHS
Michael Greene	Wayne County	FCRB Region 1 Board Member
Terri Henrizi	Education Coordinator	Assoc. for Children's Mental Health
Monica Hunt	Oakland County	FCRB Region 6 Board Member
Shayne Machen	Special Advisor to Children's Services Admin. Director	MDHHHS
Gary Madden	Manistee County	FCRB Region 3 Board Member
Rubina Mustafa	Legal Guardian ad Litem	Michigan Children's Law Center
Shirley Norman	Saginaw County	FCRB Region 3 Board Member
Egypt Otis	Genesee County	FCRB Region 2 Board Member
Michelle Parra	Program Manager	Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange
Seth Perksy	Deputy Director	MDHHS Office of Family Advocate
Kadi Prout	Director of Child Welfare Policy	MI Federation for Children & Families
Janet Reynolds Snyder	Executive Director	MI Federation for Children & Families
Barb Russ	Wexford County	FCRB Region 4 Board Member
Patty Sabin	President/CEO	Michigan CASA
Suzanna Shkreli	Ombudsman	Office of Children's Ombudsman
Ryan Speidel	Deputy Director	Office of Children's Ombudsman
Lucinda Wakeman	Branch County	FCRB Region 5 Board Member
Jerry Webb	Lapeer County	FCRB Region 6 Board Member
Glenn Wing	Marquette County	FCRB Region 4 Board Member
Jennifer Wrayno	Director, Business Service Center 5	MDHHS

## 2022 FCRB Program Snapshot

<b>Total Number of Foster Care Cases Reviewed:</b>	<b>227 cases involving 412 children</b>
<b>Total Number of FCRB Case Review Meetings:</b>	<b>140 meeting days</b>
<b>Total Number of Foster Parent Appeals:</b>	<b>86 investigations involving 128 children</b>

Michigan's 12 Foster Care Review Boards met on 226 occasions throughout 2022 to review 227 foster care cases with 412 children and 86 foster parent appeals involving 128 children. Once a case is identified for review, the boards are required to review the foster care case every six months until permanency is achieved. The report describes in more detail the information in this snapshot.

### Requested Case Reviews

- 46 cases reviewed in 2022 (20%) were cases in which an interested party specifically requested FCRB review.
- 22 were newly requested in 2022.
- The top reason for requesting FCRB review was based upon the child not achieving timely permanency.

### Case Reviews for Children Awaiting Adoption

- 44 cases were selected for review in 2022 (19%). These are referred to as MARE cases in this report.

### Random Selection Cases

- 137 cases (60%) were randomly and included children who have been placed in foster care for less than 90 days.
- The focus on newer cases is to ensure the initial case service plan is tailored to meet the unique needs of the family.

### Top Systemic Issues

- Caseworker turnover (106 children)
- Parents utilizing but not benefitting from services offered (102 children)
- Frequent changes in child's placement (86 children)

### Number of FCRB Recommendations made in 2022

- 1,753 recommendations were made related to child well-being issues
- 364 recommendations were made related to permanency issues
- 56 recommendations were made related to child safety issues

### Foster Parent Appeals

- 86 foster parent appeals conducted

### Program Structure

- 6 statewide regions
- 30 Advisory Committee members
- 12 regional boards (2 per SCAO region)
- 75 volunteer board members

## Foster Parent Appeals: The FCRB's Role in Reducing Unnecessary Placement Moves

To reduce the number of placement moves children experience while in foster care, with certain exceptions<sup>1</sup>, [MCL 712A.13b](#) allows foster parents to appeal the agency's decision to move a child or children from their home to the Foster Care Review Board (FCRB). The FCRB is responsible for determining if the placement move is in the child's best interest so that children in foster care do not experience multiple placement moves, which has been shown to have negative, long-term consequences.

The law requires the FCRB to investigate eligible foster parent appeals within seven days of receiving an eligible appeal request. A report must be provided to the court, or to the Michigan Children's Institute (MCI) Superintendent when parental rights have been terminated, within three days after the investigation stating whether or not the FCRB determined the move was in the child's best interests.

If the FCRB agrees with the agency that the placement change is in the child's best interests, the appeal is concluded. If, however, the FCRB agrees with the foster parent and determines that the move is **not** in the child's best interests, the court or the MCI have up to 14 days to make the final decision about the proposed move. This quick turn-around time ensures that the proposed placement move is investigated and decided quickly.

In 2022, the FCRB held 86 foster parent appeals. A review of the five previous year's data shows that appeals drastically decreased during the pandemic in 2020 and have been on the rise in 2021 and 2022.

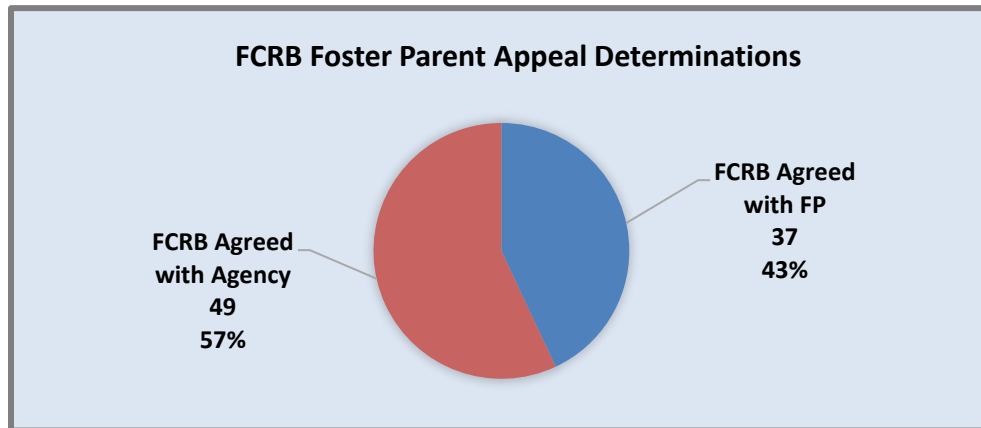
Year	Foster Parent Appeals
<b>2022</b>	<b>86</b>
2021	83
2020	74
2019	127
2018	125
<b>Average Number of Appeals per year in past 5 years</b>	<b>99</b>

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<sup>1</sup> A foster parent may not appeal a placement move if: (1) the foster parent requests or agrees to the move, (2) the court orders the move, (3) the change in placement is less than 30 days after the child's removal from home, or (4) the change in placement is less than 90 days after the child's removal from home and the new placement is with a relative.

## FCRB Foster Parent Appeal Determinations

In 2022, the FCRB investigated 86 foster parent appeals involving 128 children. In the 86 appeal determinations, the board supported the agency's decision to move the child in 49 cases (57%). The FCRB determined the move was not in the child's best interests in 37 cases (43%), requiring the court or MCI Superintendent to make the final decision on the placement move.



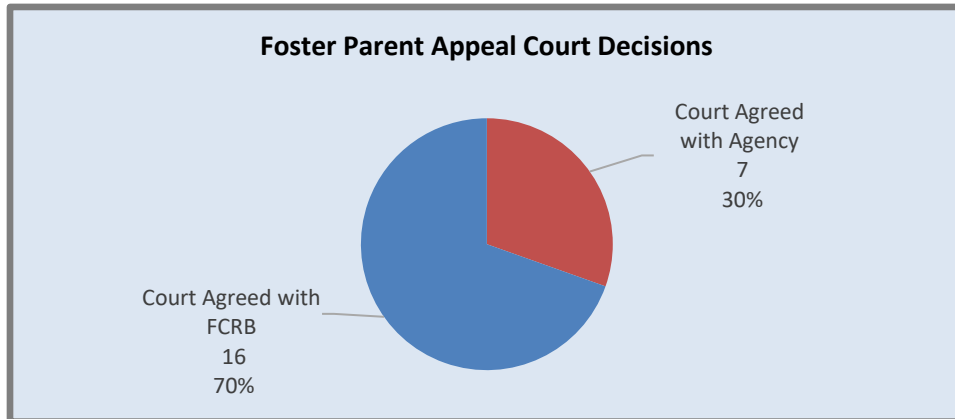
### Foster Parent Appeal Decisions by Court or MCI Superintendent

As described above, pursuant to the law, when the FCRB agrees with the agency that the placement change is in the child's best interests, the appeal is concluded. But when the FCRB finds that the proposed placement move is **not** in the child's best interests, for temporary court wards, the law requires the court to hold a placement review hearing between 7 – 14 days to make the final decision about the proposed move. In foster parent appeals involving permanent court wards (meaning all parental rights are terminated), the MCI Superintendent must make the final placement decision within 14 days of the FCRB's finding.

Of the 37 foster parent appeals requiring a final court or MCI decision in 2022, the courts held 23 placement review hearings and the MCI made placement decisions for 11 permanent court wards. For the remaining 3 cases, no final dispositions were needed as the placement was preserved following the FCRB appeal investigation and determination.

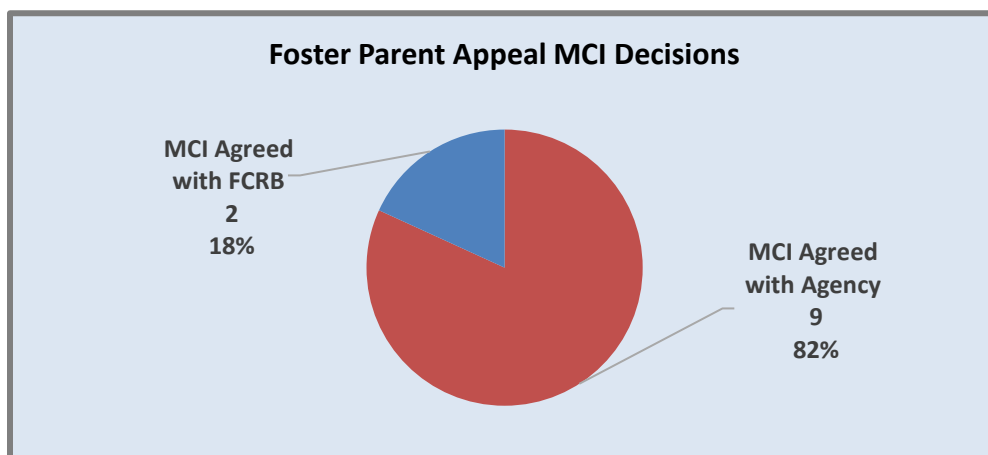
### Foster Parent Appeal Court Decisions

As reflected in the chart below, in the 23 foster parent appeals decided by the court, the courts agreed with the FCRB that the proposed move was not in the child’s best interests in 16 cases (70%), thereby ensuring those children were not unnecessarily moved from their foster homes.

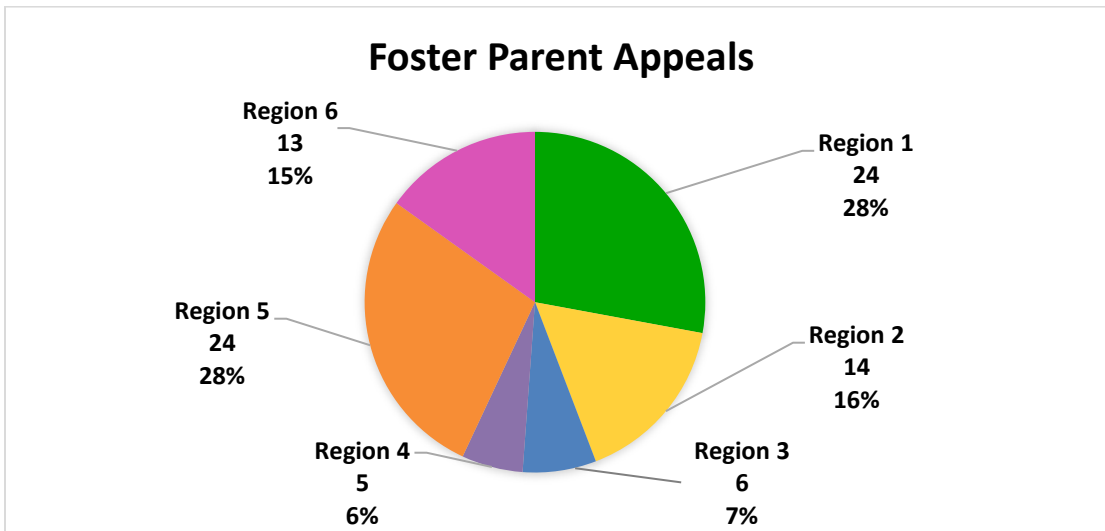


### Foster Parent Appeal MCI Superintendent Decisions

In 2 out of the 11 foster appeals that the MCI Superintendent decided in 2022 (18%), the MCI Superintendent agreed with the FCRB determination that the move was not in the child’s best interests. While 18 percent may seem like a low percentage, it is important in that oftentimes the MCI Superintendent already agreed to the placement move prior to the appeal. This suggests that the FCRB appeal process is effective at ensuring additional consideration of children’s placement moves by the MCI Superintendent, as frequent moves are detrimental to children.



## 2022 Foster Parent Appeal Information by Region



<b><u>Foster Parent Appeal Outcomes by Region</u></b>	<b><u>1</u></b>	<b><u>2</u></b>	<b><u>3</u></b>	<b><u>4</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>	<b><u>6</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
<b>No. of Appeals</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>	<b><u>86</u></b>
<b>FCRB Agreed with the Foster Parent - move not in child's best interests</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b><u>37</u></b>
<b>FCRB Agreed with the Agency – move was in child's best interests</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b><u>49</u></b>
<b>Court Agreed with the Foster Parent / FCRB decision</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b><u>14</u></b>
<b>Court Agreed with the Agency</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b><u>6</u></b>
<b>Court Was Not Held</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b><u>3</u></b>
<b>MCI Agreed with the Foster Parent/ FCRB decision</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b><u>2</u></b>
<b>MCI Agreed with the Agency</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b><u>9</u></b>

## Youth Voice in Foster Parent Appeals

The FCRB believes that foster youth should be involved in decisions about their lives and can provide keen insight to decision-makers about their quality of care and wishes for permanency. Over the past few years, the FCRB has focused on increasing youth participation in FCRB case review meetings and foster parent appeals. The perspectives of the youth, and hearing from them directly about their needs and wishes, is very beneficial to the citizen review process as it helps the FCRB craft more meaningful recommendations to the courts, agencies, and families.

In 2019, program staff began collecting data on youth participation in foster parent appeals for youth age 11+. The focus on children age 11+ is based on the Michigan Court Rule 3.921(B)(2)(i) requirement that children age 11+ are entitled to receive notice of court hearings. Collecting and maintaining consistent data has allowed the program to determine a baseline of performance on youth engagement from which to set goals to improve upon, as well as begin to identify potential trends in youth participation in court hearings and FCRB meetings.

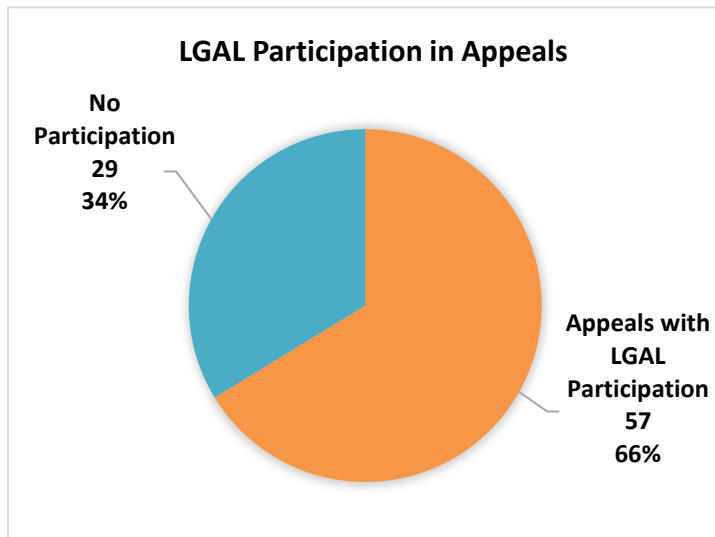
As shown in the chart below, in 2022, 12 youth participated in foster parent appeals (14%). However, the percentage of youth age 11+ who participated in appeals was higher with 3 out of 10 youth (30%) participating.

<b>Total # of Appeals</b>	86
Appeals with Youth Participation	12 (14%)
<b>Total # of Appeals with Youth Age 11+</b>	10
Appeals with Youth Participation	3 (30%)

The FCRB's Increasing Youth Engagement Workgroup is looking at strategies to further increase youth voice and encourage their participation in FCRB meetings. The workgroup will consult with the SCAO-CWS Youth Champion, as an expert with lived foster care experience who can ensure the youth perspective is authentically represented in their recommendations. The Michigan Court Improvement Program (CIP) also has targeted projects to improve youth voice in foster care, which makes this an important cross-over priority issue for both programs.

## Lawyer-Guardian Ad Litem Participation in Foster Parent Appeals

In 2022, Lawyer-Guardians Ad Litem (LGALs) participated in 66% of foster parent appeals, either by providing written information to the Boards (19%), attending the appeal meeting (44%), or both (3%). LGAL input in foster parent appeals is a critical component of the Board’s determination as to whether the placement move is in the child’s best interests.



**Total # of Appeals 86**  
**Appeals with LGAL Participation 57**

Written Statement	16
Present at Appeal	38
Present and Written	3
No Involvement	29

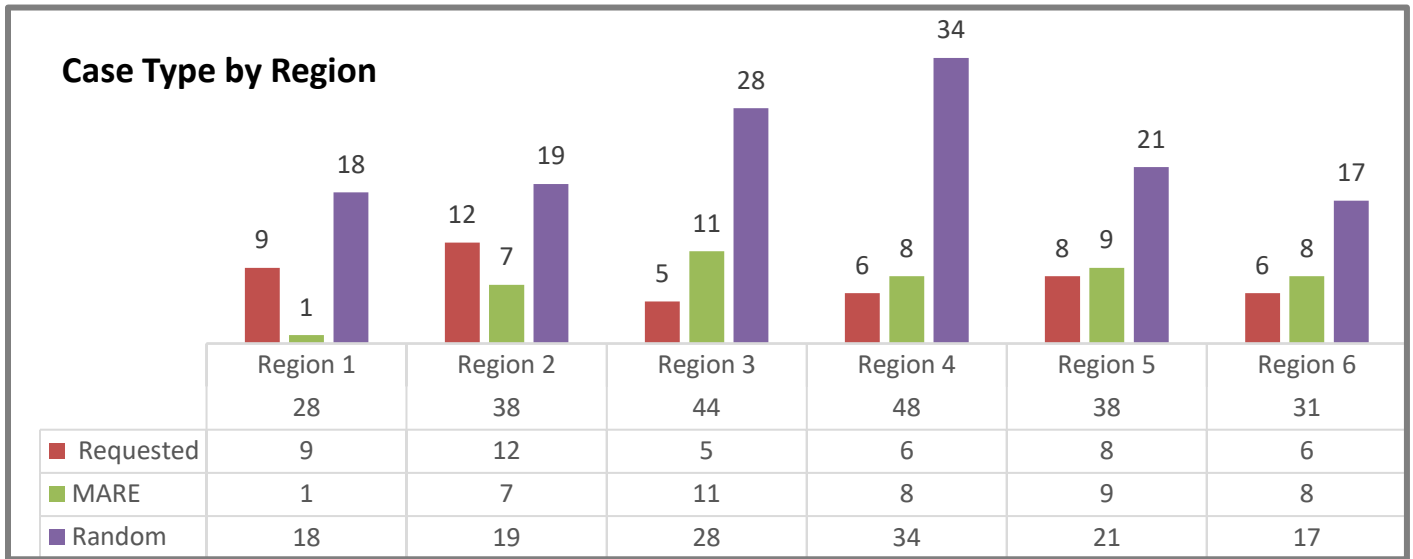
## FCRB Case Reviews: Ensuring Children Achieve Timely Permanency

Foster Care Review Board members serve on one of 12 regional boards within the 6 SCAO regions (see page 20 for a [map](#) of the SCAO regions). The boards meet monthly to review foster care cases that are either referred to the FCRB for review (requested) or randomly selected. Once a case is identified for review, the FCRB continues to review the case until the child achieves permanency and the case is closed or when the person requesting the review states that further review is no longer necessary as their reasons for requesting review have been rectified.

Board members carefully read case material to prepare for the case review meetings. During the meeting, the boards then engage in facilitated dialogue to gather input from various interested parties, with a focus on the children's safety, permanency, and well-being prior to issuing a report to the court and agency with clear and articulate recommendations. Most boards have five permanent board members, and most regions have additional alternate members designated only for foster parent appeals or who serve when a permanent board member is unavailable.

The chart below identifies the number of case reviews by region and by the case selection type. Once a case is selected for review, the Board continues to review it every six months until permanency is achieved or the requesting party no longer wishes for it to be reviewed. Cases selected from the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) are randomly-selected cases of **permanent court wards** that the Boards are required to review pursuant to MCL 722.137(1)(g), which includes:

- (i) Children who are registered with MARE and who have been on hold status for not less than 12 months;
- (ii) Children who have not been registered with MARE, have been permanent wards for not less than 6 months, and do not have a documented permanency plan in place; and
- (iii) Children who are less than 12 years of age and have been listed in the MARE photo listing book for more than 6 months and for whom no family has been identified.



**TOTAL Number of Cases Reviewed 227**  
**Cases Requested for Review 46 (20%)**  
**MARE Cases Reviewed 44 (19%)**  
**Randomly Selected Cases 137 (60%)**

## Requested Case Reviews

A local family court, Department of Health and Human Services, private child placement agency, parent, child, parent attorney, LGAL, tribe, foster parent, relative caregiver, CASA or other professional involved with a child in foster care may request a case be reviewed by a regional board. The identity of the party requesting the case is kept confidential. In 2022, the top requestors for FCRB case review were Parents and Foster Parents/Relative Caregivers, with 22 new requested cases accepted for review.

The requests for FCRB case review typically include several issues. The top four reasons for case review requests in 2022 were:

- 1) Child not achieving timely permanency = **33**
- 2) Well-being concerns for the child = **27**
- 3) Safety concerns for the child = **9**
- 4) Case management concerns = **3**

## Permanent Court Wards

The FCRB reviewed 44 cases involving 56 youth permanent court ward, or MARE, cases in 2022. This means that all parental rights to the children have been terminated and the children remain in foster care. The top issues identified in these case reviews were:

- 1) **Lack of available adoptive homes** (32 youth)
- 2) **Service referrals not occurring in a timely manner for children** (12 youth)
- 3) **Caseworker turnover** (9 youth)
- 4) **Caseload exceeds MDHHS requirement for foster care worker (13)** (7 youth)
- 5) **Permanency plan inappropriate to child’s needs** (6 youth)

## LGAL Participation in Case Reviews

The LGAL serves as the independent representative for the child’s best interests, and Michigan law (MCL 712A.17d) outlines their minimum duties. Some of the requirements include conducting an independent investigation, and meeting with the child before court hearings. The Boards find information from LGALs very informative for their case review process and encourage their participation, which may be in writing, in person at the review meeting, or both.

During case review meetings, board members will inquire as to if the LGAL supports the permanency goal, is engaging the child and advocating for his or her needs, and if they have any issues or recommendations for the case to ensure timely permanency, safety, and well-being. Over the past few years, as shown in the chart below, LGAL participation in FCRB case reviews has been increasing.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Present at Review</b>	25 (9%)	69 (20%)	78 (32%)	94 (37%)	64 (28%)
<b>Completed Questionnaire</b>	100 (35%)	149 (44%)	94 (38%)	99 (40%)	98 (43%)
<b>Both present at review and completed questionnaire</b>	10 (3%)	19 (5%)	33 (14%)	29 (12%)	27 (12%)
<b>Total # of Reviews</b>	289	342	244	250	227
<b>LGAL participation all types</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>83%</b>

## Identified Child Welfare Systemic Issues

Michigan law (MCL 722.139) requires the FCRB to identify system-wide problems that impede the timely achievement of permanency for children and make related recommendations to address the problems.

In 2022, the top three identified barriers to permanency & systemic issues included high caseworker turnover, parents utilizing but not benefiting from services, and frequent changes in the child's placement.

- 1. Caseworker Turnover.** The Boards found that turnover affects the agency's ability to achieve the best outcomes for children, youth, and families it serves. Not all turnover is preventable, but agencies can be aware of the factors that are predictive of high turnover and implement strategies to mitigate those factors. Casey Family Programs explored the variables that contribute to high rates of child welfare workforce turnover and strategies that child welfare agencies can consider helping reduce worker turnover.

See: [Strategies to Improve Child Welfare Worker Retention | Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development \(qic-wd.org\)](#) which discusses:

- Prioritizing inquiry and assessment
  - Leading and elevating comprehensive work development
  - Finding and hiring the best applicants
  - Onboarding and welcoming new staff
  - Providing incentives and case management supports
  - Managing and supervising effectively
  - Nurturing a healthy agency climate and culture
- 2. Parents utilizing but not benefitting from services.** In some circumstances, the Boards found that case plans could have been better-tailored and more clearly state the expectations of the family and the agency. Oftentimes, case plans require the parents to participate in 10 or more services, without any prioritization or specifics regarding how the parents demonstrate benefit. The Children's Bureau has a Family-Centered Case Planning and Case Management [website](#) that includes numerous resources to assist agencies in the development of high-quality case service plans that are tailored to the families' strengths and needs.

**3. Frequent changes in child’s placement.** The Boards found that placement instability has a negative impact on all three goals of the child’s safety, permanency, and well-being. Casey Family Programs provides the following key strategies to improve placement stability:

- Placing children with relatives or family members when possible
- Placement matching to make optimal first placements for children
- Improving services to children in care
- Programs that support foster parents and relative caregivers to better address children’s needs including trauma informed parenting education.
- Caseworker retention
- Staff training

For additional information, please see this Casey Family Programs brief: [Placement stability strategies – Casey Family Programs](#)

## Foster Care Review Board Advisory Committee

The FCRB Report Workgroup authors this section of the Annual Report. Their task is to emphasize the Advisory Committee's collective expertise in providing reflective advice, insight, and recommendations when systemic or practical issues as well as gaps in services are identified by the FCRB. The FCRB Advisory Committee convened four times in 2022 and participated in the following four working groups: Annual Report Workgroup; Annual Training Planning Workgroup; Youth Engagement Workgroup, and Foster Parent Participation in Court Hearings Workgroup.

Throughout 2022, Foster Care Review Board case reviews and appeals continued virtually over Zoom. During the year, access to documents changed to Microsoft Teams which expanded our options for communication. As with most changes, this required new skills and adjustments. With the support of staff and fellow Board Members, early issues with access and navigation issues were resolved. A good number of new Board Members were recruited and added to fill vacancies. The COVID restrictions and safety concerns prompted the move to virtual meetings, offering efficiency and increased participation rates of support parties, foster youth and families. A question yet to be addressed is how our virtual contacts may limit building rapport as a team and integrating new board members with support.

Prior in-person meetings offered ample time for informal conversations and extended discussion, fostering our ability to rely on each other's strengths, background experience, and knowledge of the communities. Now that Zoom meetings are fully instituted, it is time to reflect upon the impact the Zoom format has upon board member rapport and the support and integration of new Board Members. **Recommendation: Discuss and evaluate FCRB's current functioning and develop plans and strategies for enhancing board member team building.**

The Advisory Committee supported re-arranging the quarterly meeting agenda to allow for regional board member representatives to share regional and state systemic trends and issues in the beginning of the meeting rather than at the end. Thereby, allowing for optimal conversations with stakeholders regarding MDHHS policy and best practice. The FCRB program is excited to have this additional level of contact and collaboration during the meeting. **Recommendation: The FCRB program should continue to collect and track systemic issues and solutions identified during the Advisory Committee meeting.**

The FCRB Annual Report Workgroup selected to demonstrate the significance of the FCRB Comment Card, which was implemented April 2021 to obtain real-time feedback from interested parties who participated during a case review or a foster parent appeal meeting. Comment Cards are provided to meeting participants within 30 days of the meetings.

Anytime a case review or appeal report is issued to interested parties, the FCRB asks meeting participants to fill out a "Comment Card" to provide feedback and help SCAO-CWS evaluate the program's performance. The FCRB Comment Card is distributed electronically via survey monkey. The feedback is anonymous and routinely collected/shared with program staff to promote continuous quality improvement.

In 2021, the Annual Report Workgroup recommended that the FCRB collect data from surveys to evaluate the program's efficiency and performance. We are pleased to announce the first full year of collecting surveys in 2022.

The program received 102 comment cards from January 1 to December 31, 2022. Below is a summary of those responses:

*Reviews:*

1. 95% received timely notice the FCRB meeting date and time.
2. 93% felt they were given the opportunity to address the board members and ask questions.
3. 88% felt the FCRB meeting discussion focused on case specific barriers and solutions to timely permanency, safety, well- being and best interests of the child.
4. Regarding review reports:
  - a. 75% felt the report provided accurate and factual information.
  - b. 88% felt the report was not biased.
  - c. 85% felt the report provided feasible and appropriate recommendations.
  - d. 70% felt the report provided helpful information about the LGAL's involvement in the case.
  - e. 83% felt the report provided helpful information about the parent's or foster parent's issues or concerns about the case.

*Appeals:*

1. 100% received timely notice the FCRB meeting date and time.
2. 94% felt they were given the opportunity to address the board members and ask questions.
3. 84% felt the FCRB meeting discussion focused on case specific strengths and barriers of the foster home/relative placement, safety, child well-being and best interests of the child.
4. Regarding appeal reports:
  - a. 75% felt the report provided accurate and factual information.
  - b. 74% felt the report was not biased.
  - c. 74% felt the report provided feasible and appropriate recommendations.
  - d. 70% felt the report provided helpful information about the LGAL's position of the move/proposed move.
  - e. 70% felt the report provided helpful information about the parent's or foster parent's issues about the move/proposed move.

Interested Parties also provided written comments that validate the FCRB program's role and process. Here are some of the responses:

“This was my first FCRB meeting and it was not as intense as I was expecting. The board members asked appropriate and pertinent questions regarding the case and the main issue of permanency which the agency has been seeking for quite a while. I hope their recommendation in their review will be taken into consideration by the court so that this youth can finally have permanency!”

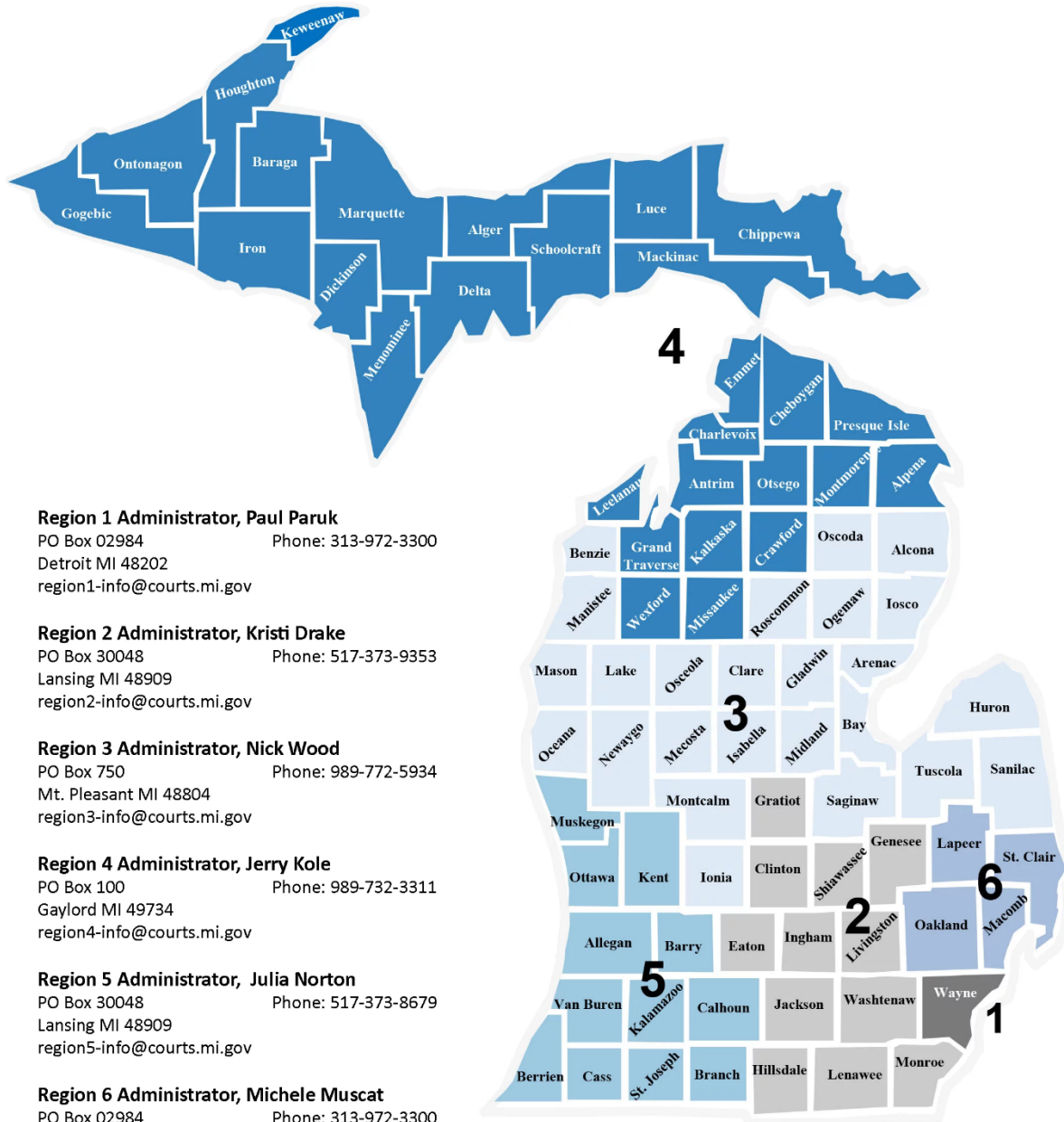
“Participating in the foster review board allowed me, as a foster parent, to feel as though I had a voice in my foster son’s case as well as provided me with information, I had not previously been aware of. I found it very beneficial and was happy to see his interests were the priority.”

“The appeal process went smooth and the FCRB was able to document the reason for their decision in their report.”

“I appreciate the board’s ability to approach the appeal with an unbiased and focused perspective. It was evident during the meeting that there were strong feelings in both support of and against the current placement within the current caregiver’s home, and I feel as if the FCRB members were able to navigate the complexities very well.”

# State Court Administrative Office Regions

Effective August 1, 2022



**Region 1 Administrator, Paul Paruk**  
PO Box 02984 Phone: 313-972-3300  
Detroit MI 48202  
region1-info@courts.mi.gov

**Region 2 Administrator, Kristi Drake**  
PO Box 30048 Phone: 517-373-9353  
Lansing MI 48909  
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**Region 3 Administrator, Nick Wood**  
PO Box 750 Phone: 989-772-5934  
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**Region 4 Administrator, Jerry Kole**  
PO Box 100 Phone: 989-732-3311  
Gaylord MI 49734  
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**Region 5 Administrator, Julia Norton**  
PO Box 30048 Phone: 517-373-8679  
Lansing MI 48909  
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**Region 6 Administrator, Michele Muscat**  
PO Box 02984 Phone: 313-972-3300  
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**Michigan Supreme Court**  
State Court Administrative Office  
**Child Welfare Services-Foster Care Review Board**

Michigan Hall of Justice  
P.O. Box 30048  
Lansing, Michigan 48909  
517-373-0130

[www.courts.michigan.gov/FCRB](http://www.courts.michigan.gov/FCRB)