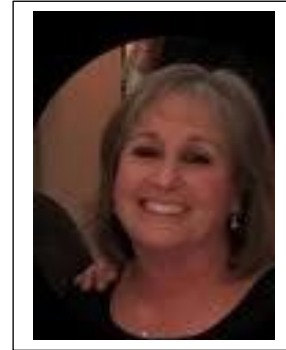


FY20 – FY21 Board of Directors

MERYL DASKAL PANIAK, MSW, JD

Joined CACI Board - 2020



Meryl has worked in child welfare either as a social worker or an attorney for the past 35 years. Meryl earned her Master of Social Work degree from Washington University in St. Louis in 1985, and a law degree from IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law in 1991. Her social work experience includes work as a child welfare/intact family worker, a psychiatric social worker, and a private therapist for victims of domestic violence.

As an attorney with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS/Department) for 20 years, Meryl held numerous positions. She served as the Inspector General for the DCFS from 2018 to 2020 managing an office of social workers and lawyers, who conducted investigations into allegations of misconduct, misfeasance, malfeasance, or violations of rules, procedures, or laws by any employee, foster parent, service provider, or contractor of the DCFS as well as child deaths. Prior to that Meryl was the Ethics Officer and Chief Counsel for Legislative Affairs in which she provided legal advice and counsel regarding the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, pending legislation affecting the Department and drafting and proposing new legislation and assisting to implement rules and procedures. As Associate Deputy Director of Child Protection, Meryl was responsible for coordinating and ensuring that upon receiving reports of child abuse/neglect made to the Department, that investigators acted to protect the best interest of the child, and ensure their safety by offering protective services in order to prevent any further harm and stabilize the home environment and preserve family life whenever possible.

Meryl has also held the position of Chief Administrative Law Judge for the DCFS, Administrative Hearings Unit, coordinating and administering a system of hearings on a variety of child welfare, child protection, and licensing issues. Prior to her position as the Chief Administrative Law Judge with DCFS, Meryl served as Special Assistant General Counsel, and previous to her work with the Department, from January 1992 to June 2000 Meryl was employed as a Guardian Ad Litem with the Cook County Office of the Public Guardian, engaging in the full-time practice of law in Juvenile Court, representing children in trials and various hearings as well as supervising other staff attorneys.