

New York State Citizen Review Panels
Minutes of the Joint Meeting
October 10, 2008

Attendance:

<i>ECRP:</i>	Edward Blatt	Lance Jackson	Mary McCarthy
	Dianne Meckler	JoAnn Merriman	Julia Smead Bielawski
	Carrie Smith		
<i>NYC CRP:</i>	Jocelyn Brown	Wayne Ho	David Lansner
	Elba Montalvo	Mathea Rubin	Jorge Saenz DeViteri
<i>WCRP:</i>	Lourdes Iglesias	Ellen Kennedy	Wendy Nilsen
<i>OCFS Guests:</i>	Gladys Carrion	William Gettman	Renee Hallock
<i>OCFS Staff:</i>	Terry Palumbo		
<i>SCAA Staff:</i>	Karen Schimke	Diane Mastin	

Handouts:

Meeting Agenda
Attendance list
2008 Report Content suggestions and timeline
Draft pieces for the 2008 Panel Report
2008 Recommendations Worksheet
2008 Recommendations Working Document
Input received for consideration: COFCCA, CWOP, CCC, Lawyers for Children, National Advocates for Pregnant Women
Draft recommendations on Parent Education and Disproportionality
NYS Child Welfare Financing law
2008 CRP Grant Information
2008 Child Welfare Legislation updated
Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act information
Voices for America's Children Election 2008 update

The Joint panel meeting began with a welcome and introductions. OCFS Commissioner Gladys Carrion provided an overview of priorities and initiatives for OCFS's work with children and families. She offered an update on the panels' 2007 recommendations and the work that has moved forward on those recommendations. She stated that although she embraces the 2007 report, OCFS has been hampered in terms of what it can do by the financial crisis in New York State. Her priorities include right sizing and reforming the juvenile justice system, implementing a quality rating system in child care, stabilizing the child welfare workforce, implementing Family Assessment Response and other pilots, promoting accountability, and the task force's work on disproportionate minority representation in systems.

Renee Hallock, Director of the Child and Family Services Review, presented an overview of New York State's review and planning in response to the review. The review pointed to three areas of primary importance in New York to which OCFS must turn its attention: safety and recurrence, permanence, and workforce issues. She stated that OCFS will

proclaim next year as the year of the caseworker and will work to promote respect for the position. Strategies are being developed to increase recruitment and retention of workers, to reduce recurrence of families entering the child welfare system, and to support more timely adoptions. OCFS will work with local districts in support of a similar review in each.

Karen Schimke, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, gave an overview of the political climate and fiscal realities with New York State's budget. William Gettman, Executive Deputy Commissioner of OCFS then provided panel members with an overview of New York's budget as it relates to the Office of Children and Family Services, the forthcoming cuts in expenditures, and OCFS federal agenda.

The afternoon portion of the meeting was devoted to a discussion leading to the panel members choosing their recommendations for their 2008 report. Panel members agreed to draft recommendations on the following topics. 1) Preservation of preventive funding and the need for preventive services to reduce harm to children. 2) Continuation of the transformation of the child welfare system to a community child protection system to include family assessment response, elimination of anonymous reporting, increased parent education and changes in policies and/or procedures so that caseworkers can spend more time directly with families. They agreed to suggest specific areas for cost-savings and agreed to partner with OCFS on a federal agenda.

Panel members also offered their suggestions for the panel's 2009 grant.