

NYC CRP  
Minutes of the Meeting  
March 4, 2008

*Attendance list attached.*

The meeting was divided into two parts. The first part was a discussion with invited guests to receive input and feedback to advance the panels' recommendations. The second portion of the meeting was a discussion with panel members only to debrief and plan next steps.

Panel members were particularly interested in receiving input on four of the recommendations: system reform; preventive services; accountability; and, workforce issues. Several themes emerged in the two hour discussion. Further study is needed to understand if such suggestions would advance child well-being or lead to unintended consequences.

*Legislative Change:*

Several suggestions were made as to possible reforms in statute that would help support child welfare work. A suggestion was made to add a clause that addresses a timeframe to the Permanency legislation. Currently there is no point at which decisions must be finalized. Ohio law could serve as a model. Terms such as "diligent efforts" in various pieces of legislation should be spelled out more carefully. The social work licensing law expires this year and the child welfare financing law is up for renewal next year. Both could be vehicles for reform.

*Family Court:*

Family Court was mentioned as needing attention. The Courts are overwhelmed and under-resourced. Any additional resources or changes should provide easier access to services and lead to individualized treatment or package of services to meet unique family needs. Cases can always be brought directly to the Supreme Court.

*Housing:*

The child welfare system must link to efforts to increase the number of supportive housing units available. Currently only 30 or 40 units exist in NYC. Families involved with the child welfare system need affordable housing with services on premises.

*Preventive Services:*

When asked, Commissioner Mattingly thought that an additional \$50 million dollars would help support the needs of families in the city. Other comments indicated a need for more flexibility with the dollars from various funding sources. All struggle with the Department of Budget's need for accountability and evaluation of impact and outcomes. A funding floor would be especially helpful. Attendees indicated their interest in work conducted by the Human Services Council on master contracting. Service providers need to be able to respond to families holistically; categorical funding impedes that. In addition, families need to be engaged earlier as part of a prevention strategy.

Several gaps in services were mentioned including the need for services in the evening and on weekends, services tailored to individual family needs, and more community based mental health

services. Many families involved with the child welfare system have domestic violence concerns as well. More links need to be established with services for men who engage in domestic violence.

Also stressed is the need to consult with families and youth more frequently regarding services, incorporating self-determination into all plans, and receiving their input into panel recommendations. Additional financial support is needed to support parent advocate programs.

*Workforce:*

The work and reforms listed in the panels' report require a fundamental shift at the board and executive level within organizations. Although organizations talk about quality, the work really focuses on compliance. More training is needed for supervisors to support understanding of their critical role with front line workers. ChildStat has been an extremely useful tool in identifying compliance vs. clinical issues.

The system that is currently in place is efficient, but does not allow caseworkers to do their job well and take ownership of it. To reduce turnover, caseworkers need to feel valued. An esprit de corps needs to be developed and frequent praise offered for what goes right.

Child welfare receives enormous attention from the media when things go wrong and no attention when things go right. OCFS and COFCCA are working with local districts to help districts plan a communications strategy to inform others about the work done on behalf of children and families as well as to respond in crisis situations. Public perceptions need to be changed and an appropriate slogan could be helpful. Specific plans are being developed for April, Child Abuse Prevention month.

Recruitment needs attention. ACS has just launched a public recruitment drive in New York City. Models can be found in other systems, such as education, where districts have been successful in attracting teachers to difficult schools.

*Next Steps and Need for Advocacy:*

Some suggestions were given for next steps and the need for advocacy on these issues. Attendees were particularly supportive of an Advocacy Day in Albany to support funding strategies for services. They suggested a series of morning meetings on various topics raised at this meeting, including workforce challenges, creative financing, and successes in overcoming various challenges. They suggested an interest in working with the panel on quality assurance, workforce qualifications, and public perceptions, all of which are linked.

Attendees were encouraged to send additional comments to SCAA staff.

*Panel member only portion of the meeting:*

Panel members met after this discussion to respond to the input they just received and to plan next steps. Notes from the discussion will be circulated to the panel. SCAA staff agreed to offer some options based on the feedback received. SCAA staff will meet or talk with Commissioner Carrion regarding specific response to the panels' recommendations, especially those having to do with a system reform task force. Panel members expressed interest in publicity regarding their report and recommendations. Editorial board meetings are a possibility.

**NYC Citizen Review Panel - March 4, 2008**

**Attendees**

<i>Panel Members</i>		
Brettschneider	Eric	Co-chair
Brown	Jocelyn	Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital
Ho	Wayne	Coalition for Asian American
Lansner	David	Co-chair, Lansner & Kubitschek
Plummer	Yvonne H.	Elmhurst Hospital Center
Rubin	Mathea	
Saenz De Viteri	Jorge	Bronx Community College
White	Marion	Child Abuse & Prevention Inc.
<i>Panel Support Staff</i>		
Schimke	Karen	Schuyler Center for Analysis & Advocacy
Christenson	Robin	Schuyler Center for Analysis & Advocacy
Mastin	Diane	Schuyler Center for Analysis & Advocacy
Palumbo	Terry	Office of Children and Family Services
<i>Guests</i>		
Arsham	Michael	Child Welfare Organizing Project
Barrios-Paoli	Lilliam	Safe Space
Cardieri	Joseph	Administration for Children's Services
Carnevale	Elysia	Administration for Children's Services
Cortese	Michele	Center for Family Representation
Earner	Ilze	Hunter School of Social Work
Farber	Julie	Children's Rights
Farmery	Vivian	Just Tell
Flory	Jan	Administration for Children's Services
Freedman	Karen	Lawyers for Children
Goldman	Fatima	Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies
Jones Austin	Jennifer	United Way of NYC
Kearney	Caroline	Legal Services for New York City
Mattingly	John	Administration for Children's Services
McGee	Karen	Center for Family Representation
Moore	Athena	NYC Chapter, National Association of Social Workers
Moser	Theresa	Legal Aid Society
Poole	Sheila	Office of Children and Family Services
Purcell	Jim	Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies
Schleicher	Linda	SSEU-Local 371
Tobis	David	Fund for Social Change/Child Welfare Fund
Velez	Laura	Office of Children and Family Services
Wulczyn	Fred	Chapin Hall
Yanche	Michelle	Neighborhood Family Services Coalition