

New York City Citizen Review Panel
Minutes of the May 19, 2006 meeting

Attendees:

Panel Members:

Jocelyn Brown	Erica Brettschneider	Yvonne Hutchins Plummer
David Lansner	Mathea Rubin	Marion White

<i>OCFS Staff:</i>	Larry Brown	Nancy Martinez	Jane Lynch
	Richard Nells	Thomas Hess	

<i>SCAA Staff:</i>	Diane Mastin	<i>Facilitator:</i>	Mary McCarthy, Eastern Panel
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<i>Guests:</i>	Hon. Joseph Lauria	Susan Jacobs	John Courtney
	Marilyn Johnson	Lee Pardee	Zeinab Chahine
	Vivian Farmery	Ron Richter	Comm. John Mattingly
	Fatima Goldman	Lisa Levinthal	Francis Ayuso
	Jack Krauskopf	Sr. Paulette LoMonaco	Michael Arsham
	Nyasha Griffith	Latrela Penny	Anthea McLaughlin

<i>Other:</i>	Rena Dascal	Elizabeth Speidel
	Tanza Jones	Ashley Terletzky

Meeting purpose: To discuss the panel’s 2005 recommendations and receive input from child welfare experts regarding their recommendations. The meeting began with a private discussion between OCFS staff and panelists. Guests with expertise in child welfare attended the second half of the discussion to give their input.

Issue	Narrative	Key Issues Mentioned	Possible Action Steps
Home Visiting	OCFS has 29 home visiting program sites operating in the state with a goal of implementing the program statewide. A rigorous, random assignment evaluation has certified that New York’s version, Healthy Families, is delivering the same kind of results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Family Home Visiting programs are complementary to Nurse Partnership programs. • \$80 million would be needed to implement home visiting programs statewide. 	

	as Nurse Partnership programs. The program will have \$22.2 million in funding in the 2006-07 budget. Home Visiting programs have DOB, Gubernatorial and Legislative support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCFS is negotiating with COPS to expand services in NYC. • Evaluation needed of the use of paraprofessionals vs. professionals in home visiting programs 	
Home and Community Based Waivers	Currently there are 850 home and community based waiver slots (HCBW). New funding will allow 450 new slots: 300 from Office of Mental Health (OMH) and 150 from OCFS. OMH's slots are 100% funded. Counties must contribute a local share for the OCFS slots. OCFS will be clustering the units of services into groups of 6 in order to support the administrative structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many children who are now only receiving prevention services but are eligible for HCBW slots will be served at a higher level with these new slots opening. This will free up some prevention services for those with less severe needs who are not receiving any services. • OCFS is planning to submit a foster care waiver application to CMS in the fall. 	Recommend that OCFS work collaboratively with OMH to provide one strong quality assurance program rather than duplicating services.
Family Engagement/ Communications	The notice letter that goes out to families is heavily influenced by the legal requirements for notifying families of a report that has been filed. While such a letter can never be considered a positive communication, revisions can be made to help recipients of the notice understand what it says and means for them. Westchester County is the only county that uses a revised letter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several people could be instrumental in supporting this effort in the city including Ann Isom at ACS, Michael Arsham, John Courtney and David Tobias. Rena Dascal and Elizabeth Speidel will work on behalf of the panel on these revisions. • Other letters such as the one that goes out to families to inform them of their case determination should also be revised. • Strategies to engage families through case work practice should be encouraged as well. 	<p>Jane Lynch and Karen Schimke agreed to work on a draft letter and to develop a strategy for implementation.</p> <p>OCFS staff will review the statute to see if time frames for parents are addressed in it or in regulation and will provide information in its response to the panel's recommendations.</p>
Children and Family Trust Fund	This fund provides financial support to innovative, primary prevention programs. The fund received \$2 million in the 2006-7 budget. OCFS will combine the \$2 million with federal funding to support programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fund needs a funding mechanism that is more secure. • Support for the fund varies between the legislative branch and executive branch and therefore is not based in the OCFS budget. 	Obtain list of preventive services supported in NYC with information as to percent of dollars allocated and spent on these services.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project 2015 report points to an increasingly aging population with increasing needs for services. 	
Child Fatality Reviews	Both the Assembly and Senate have proposed legislation to change the scope and composition of Fatality Review Teams. Currently, OCFS has funding for teams that is not being accessed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern raised that changes that are made are not reaching case workers. Strategy for implementing change is often lacking. • Broader issue is the abuse that happens in foster care. Can such reviews be conducted for those children who have been removed from their homes? • Reviews have led to information and changes regarding Shaken Baby, SIDS, rollover deaths, and the need for bars on windows. 	Panels take a sample of records and review cases, not just fatalities, in order to reach conclusions and make recommendations.
FBI Checks	Two versions of legislation have been introduced to allow FBI checks on foster care and adoptive parents. The Assembly and Senate are likely to pass legislation requiring checks but not retrospective checks. Checks cost about \$75 each.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern raised about the cost of such checks. • A prospective check will lead to self screening. Would be of interest to do retrospective checks to see how much of a problem exists. 	Advocacy needed to provide financial relief for the costs of conducting the required checks.
Child Advocacy Centers and Multi-Disciplinary Teams	There is a total of \$5.8 million to support Child Advocacy Centers and Multi-Disciplinary Teams in the 2006-7 budget. \$1.5 million will be used to support new centers and \$2 million to enhance services at existing locations. Co-location of services will be encouraged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tremendous variability exists in service and communication to parents provided by CAC's in NYC. • Co-location of services has the potential of leading to change in credibility or neutrality. 	Vivian Farmery, Jocelyn Brown, and Mathea Rubin expressed interest in continuing a discussion regarding hotlines and other means for youth to self-report.
Workload Standards	OCFS has contracted with Walter R. MacDonald & Associates for a time study on workload standards for CPS, Foster Care and Preventive workers. A report is due December 1 st . The 2006-7 budget provided \$500,000 for the study. Legislation has been proposed to set standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While NYC is close to workload levels that are likely to be recommended through this study, upstate districts are not close to those numbers. • Investigate alternative models such as the one used in Massachusetts. OCFS 	Harry Spence possible speaker for the panels' meetings.

		<p>is planning a possible pilot of this model. NYC, Westchester County and Schenectady County have expressed interest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will influence worker stability? • What is the impact of setting appropriate standards on salary levels? 	
Permanency	Work is being done to incorporate the requirements from the permanency bill into Connections software.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCFS is only receiving anecdotal information at this time from local districts. • Implementation has required an enormous amount of work at the same time when Connections is being implemented. There is concern that it is delaying discharge of cases. 	Monitor implementation of the bill's requirements.
Community Child Protection	Child protection is a community wide responsibility and can not rest solely with local departments of social services and OCFS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising kids safely is really a public health issue. • What ACS is doing and Jeffrey Canada is doing in Harlem are models of community child protection. • What kind of assistance is needed to support ACS in efforts towards neighborhood based services? • Is there money to fund collaborations? • Are networks achieving results or just meeting? • Schools are integral to such a system. Highbridge and Beacon are two such models which have found difficulty with funding. • ACS will award 5-8 neighborhood grants this summer to form and strengthen children's coalitions based on a model used in Cleveland. 	Support creative uses of preventive dollars allowing for flexibility. Example: COPS
Other concerns/comments		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give consideration to extending services to those in foster care to age 	

		<p>21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislation has been proposed regarding sexual predators and civil confinement. Now is the time to weigh in with any concerns, advice, or thinking.• Regarding educational neglect: need to see if patterns exist over time rather than treating only discreet incidents. Difficult to reach the person who has the first hand information upon which a report has been made.• Disproportionality: mentioned as a possible speaker on disproportionality: David Billing• Numbers continue to remain high after Nixzmary's death, up 40%. Removals are up 10%. ACS staff are overwhelmed by serious neglect cases and large number of sibling groups. Placements with family members are up 8%. Placements in boroughs have improved. Teens are difficult to place right away.	
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