

Western Citizen Review Panel
Minutes of the meeting, November 16, 2007

Attendees:

Dennis Walczyk Ellen Kennedy Stefan Perkowski
Augusta Welsh

OCFS Staff: Theresa Palumbo

SCAA Staff: Diane Mastin

Handouts:

Meeting Agenda

Annual report documents: Draft Introduction and revised opinion piece

Draft 2007 Panel Recommendations

Draft plan for 2008 meetings

Panel Correspondence from parents

CFSR Overview and request for input

Commissioner Carrion's testimony on Agency Priorities and Budget Request

October 18, 2007 Joint Panel meeting minutes

Minutes of the meeting, September 21, 2007

Powerpoint presentations from the Joint Panel meeting:

Racial and Ethnic Disproportionality and Disparities in Child Welfare

Disproportionate Minority Representation and Disparity

The meeting began with the introduction of Terry Palumbo who will represent OCFS at the panel meetings as part of responsibilities in her new role within the Office of Children and Family Services. Panel members then received an overview of the Joint Panel meeting from members who attended the meeting.

Panel members reviewed the draft introduction and revised opinion piece for their annual report. The draft recommendations were discussed and comments offered. Specifically mentioned was the recommendation having to do with educational neglect. They offered a change in title for that recommendation, a reorganization of the paragraphs, and added content. Panel members were asked to offer any further comments or suggestions for changes to SCAA staff. Changes will be incorporated and revised documents will be circulated to all three panels.

Panel members then addressed requests brought to their attention through emails from parents regarding their involvement with CPS. The panel discussed their role and responsibility with such requests to look at the larger system issues that they raise. They suggested putting a statement on the panels' web site with information on the proper process to follow when making an appeal. SCAA staff will look into what other panels do on their web sites. All three panels will have to agree to the language. SCAA staff will also obtain the latest update on one of the cases from the panel chair who was not able to attend the meeting. They agreed that the panel would not review any case while that case is being addressed in the courts or fair hearing process. In all cases, OCFS process for complaints and appeals should be followed.

The panel reviewed a draft meeting schedule for 2008 and agreed to focus their attention on educational neglect with an eye towards disproportionality and disparities. For their March 14th meeting they plan to talk with Charles Carson from OCFS and possibly a former attorney for the Buffalo Board of Education. They agreed to hold a meeting with commissioners in their region in 2008 and may invite superintendents as well. The March 14th meeting will be scheduled from 9 to 12:00.

OCFS staff reported that the Child and Family Service Review for New York State will be held in May, 2008 and that preparation for the review is underway. OCFS is now soliciting input from the public. Panel members received information as to how they can provide their input. Their replies should be sent to SCAA staff.

Members expressed concern that many panel members have been unable to attend meetings. They asked that the panel chair contact each regarding their continued interest.