

Eastern CRP  
Minutes of the Meeting  
March 19, 2010

*Attendees:*

Ed Blatt	Carrie Jefferson Smith	Mary McCarthy
JoAnn Merriman	Lance Jackson	Hector Ramirez

*OCFS Staff:* Laura Velez, Deputy Commissioner  
Renee Hallock

*SCAA Staff:* Diane Mastin

*Handouts:*

Agenda

Vera Institute's *Rethinking Educational Neglect for Teenagers New Strategies for New York State*

Executive Summary

Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program Bulleted Summary

ABCs of Kinship Guardianship Assistance

OCFS 2010-11 Executive Budget Highlights

Budget Chart

2009-10 Legislative Chart

S6262 CRP bill

ECRP 2010 Meeting Schedule

Planning Document for June CRP Joint Panel meeting

2009 CRP Report Press Release

CRP Letter to Governor Paterson in support of home visiting funding

Draft memo or support for Kinship Guardianship Assistance

Minutes of the November 6, 2009 meeting

The meeting began with a welcome and introduction to new panel member Hector Ramirez. Laura Velez, OCFS Deputy Commissioner, met with panel members to discuss the Vera Institute's report on Education Neglect, OCFS' November education neglect roundtable, and the additional work OCFS has asked Vera to complete. She stated OCFS' interest in moving forward with changes to education neglect reporting. Importantly, OCFS has added this work to their list of priorities sent to the Governor and must report quarterly on progress made. By the end of March, Vera will deliver a third report, with information about other states' experiences with youth who are truant. OCFS will also develop new screening protocols for SCR staff. Staff will ask more specific questions when they screen education neglect calls. OCFS will also develop a plan to address services for youth outside the child welfare system to reduce truancy. She stated that there is agreement to offer something different for youth who are 14 and older but services must be in place before any change in statute related to education neglect is made. Whatever changes OCFS makes will directly affect the State Education Department. Their goal is to engage schools to prevent truancy. OCFS plans to forward a program bill next year.

Discussion included the need for accountability with the schools, families, and other systems taking ownership for portions of the problem and solutions. Parent engagement needs further understanding in relationship to cultural norms. Questions were asked about funding streams that could be used to support services for youth not involved in child welfare.

Deputy Commissioner Velez discussed the proposed kinship guardianship bill with panel members. The legislation would offer another option for permanency for certain cases where returning home and adoption have been ruled out. OCFS is amenable to modifications in the bill as long as the fundamental principles contained in the bill are preserved. OCFS has contracted with Mark Testa to do a fiscal analysis and to provide information and expertise to the discussions. The bill will not take effect until January, 2011 and is projected to have no fiscal impact during its first year of implementation. Many are concerned that initial funding will come out of the Foster Care Block Grant, a funding source that is insufficient to meet current needs. Appropriate changes in funding for this option can be made when the Child Welfare Financing bill comes up for renewal the second year of implementation. Savings will be achieved through reduced administrative costs.

Deputy Commissioner Velez provided an overview of the planned Ten for 2010 Forums to discuss areas for child welfare reform and proposed strategies for implementation. The forums will provide an opportunity to gain feedback on the strategies outlined. OCFS plans to release the paper on which the forum discussions area based in March. Deputy Commissioner Velez referenced the challenge made to OCFS in the panels' 2007 Annual Report and Recommendations to create a Task Force to address broader child welfare reforms. These forums are a result of that recommendation.

Gail Haulenbeek, OCFS Director, Bureau of Program Monitoring, discussed OCFS's proposal for funding a supervision model of practice in child welfare through the Northeast and Caribbean Improvement Center. If the New York proposal is accepted, New York will receive funding and 3 ½ years of technical assistance to improve supervisors', both line and administrative, skills to provide support, organizational climate, and resiliency for caseworkers to do their jobs. Twenty-three counties sent representatives to a meeting at White Eagle to learn of this opportunity. Most expressed interest in participating in the project if funding is secured.

Panel members discussed proposed guidelines for leaving children alone and for corporal punishment suggested by NYC panel member David Lansner during the process of developing the panels' 2009 report. After discussion, panel members voted unanimously to strongly oppose the NYS panels issuing any such guidelines. Panel members received an overview of the Executive Budget. They voted to support the Kinship Guardianship Assistance program included in Article VII legislation and changes to court-ordered CPS investigations. They agreed to send a letter of concern related to the legislation proposed to create a fourth citizen review panel in New York. Their concerns are connected to lack of panel appointments and funding for a fourth panel. They reviewed questions to be discussed at the joint panel meeting in June. For the 2010 report, a suggestion was made to highlight ten years of CRP accomplishments. They agreed to change the joint panel meeting date in October to the 7<sup>th</sup> from the 8<sup>th</sup>.