

NYC CRP
Minutes of the Meeting
December 1, 2009

Attendees:

David Lansner Elba Montalvo Wayne Ho Marion White
Mathea Rubin Jocelyn Brown Jorge Saenz De Viteri

Guests: Eric Brettschneider

Carmen Ortiz Hendricks

OCFS Staff: John Mattingly Elysia Carnevale Murphy

SCAA Staff: Diane Mastin

Handouts:

Agenda

Draft 2010 Meeting Schedule

Rethinking Educational Neglect for Teenagers, New Strategies for New York State, Executive Summary

The Manatt Minute, from the Albany and New York Offices, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP
September 8, 2009 minutes

October 2, 2009 joint panel meeting minutes

Regents 2008 Board Report

Strengthening Schools by Strengthening Families, Community Strategies to Reverse Chronic Absenteeism in the Early Grades and Improve Supports for Children and Families, Executive Summary, Center for New York City Affairs, The New School

Commissioner Mattingly began the meeting with an overview of the NYC Budget as it relates to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). ACS has endured a series of budget cuts. Up to this time, he has managed to protect all frontline services to families. After the November election, he had to cut \$30 million from his budget; in 2011 another \$60 million will be cut. He laid off 608 staff on July 1st and will have to lay off another 104 in June, 2010. ACS will face another serious situation when the federal stimulus funding runs out. Caseload sizes are at 10 now and will rise to 12 with anticipated cutbacks. Although case reports have not increased, CSE's are increasing. He provided information regarding the response by agencies to the recent Request for Proposals for community partnerships and foster care. Contracts will be phased in over the span of a couple months. Under his direction, ACS is now appealing more court decisions that they believe are not fair to the family or in the child's best interests. In addition, ACS is intensifying preventive services by conducting 30 day assessments instead of 90 and developing a mobile crisis team that will meet with family members in their homes.

ACS has launched a new campaign, One Year Home, to bring down the number of days children are placed in foster care. Although ACS has been getting better at moving kids into a home within one to two years, they want to improve that time frame. ACS will expect agencies with whom it contracts to achieve better time frames, to hold a meeting between birth parents and foster care parents within 24 hours, and to hold a child safety conference within 20 days. The new campaign will take IOC conferences to the next step. ACS will be working with the mayor's office and family court judges to push cases through court more quickly. Currently, it takes eight months for a case to reach disposition. ACS will begin a FAR response for education neglect reports in one targeted zone of the city by June.

Panel members questioned Commissioner Mattingly about his concern about the delays in the Family court and pointed out that ACS is the party most responsible for the delays. They also pointed out that he has acknowledged that ACS will not get better until the Family Court gets stronger and is able to hold ACS accountable. The Panel pointed out that Family Court Judges order ACS to take actions that benefit children, or holds ACS responsible for not obeying court orders, ACS appeals, often on the ground that the Family Court does not have the power to make orders against ACS.

Chancellor Tisch, NYS Board of Regents, discussed the various challenges and opportunities at this time for the State Department of Education. The federal government has made available \$4.3 billion in competitive grants to states; New York is readying its Race to the Top proposal for \$500 to \$700 million. The education department has secured a grant from the Gates Foundation to develop plans for a data system that will follow students from pre-k to college. They hope to secure Race to the Top funding to implement the system. Such a data system will allow greater accountability for all involved in the education system. Another priority for the Regents is to increase the number of qualified teachers in the state. Federal guidelines require the bottom 5% of schools in the state; dozens will be closed. Commissioner Klein in NYC plans to propose closing the bottom 10%. Collaborations will be critical in reaching better outcomes for youth in the child welfare system and juvenile justice system. She stated the need for better tracking, a GED program for youth in the juvenile justice system, acceptance of credits by the home school district for class work completed in placement, and better services for special education students. The Regents are not a regulatory authority but a proponent of best practices. Panel members asked that education data be accessible to others. She stated there will be public hearings held within the next six months at which community members will have an opportunity to push for innovations.

Eric Brettschneider, OCFS consultant, reported on his child welfare reform work, Ten for 2010. He credited the panels' recommendation in last year's report to re-evaluate acceptance of education neglect reports as the reason Vera Institute was hired to produce its recently released report. The report suggests that education neglect reports on teens are not effective; they

overburden the child welfare system and do not reduce truancy. Casey Family Services has provided funding to hold numerous forums across the state to discuss the ten ideas for reform and develop specific strategies to advance implementation. Citizen Review Panels will be asked to co-sponsor some of the forums. The ten areas under consideration include: overbroad child protective system, human resources, permanency, collaborations, finance, workloads, neighborhood based services, foster care, innovation, and accountability.

Panel members discussed changes to the 2009 Annual Report and Recommendations. Panel members were very disappointed that the other panels and SCAA had different recollections of the agreements on recommendations made at the meeting in October. The Panel resolved to adopt written recommendations to bring to future statewide meetings and to require that statewide recommendations adopted at the meetings contain the specific language agreed upon.