

Western CRP  
Minutes of the Meeting  
September 17, 2010

*Attendees:*

Ellen Kennedy	Augusta Welsh	Paula Mazur
Dennis Walczyk	Sarlyn Tate	

*OCFS Staff:* Renee Hallock

*SCAA Staff:* Diane Mastin

*Guest:* Judge Paul Buchanan

*Handouts:*

Agenda

PowerPoint slides by Judge Buchanan

CFSR data packet on Safety and Permanency

NYS CRP 2010 Recommendations: Ideas from discussions at panel meetings

NYS CRP Joint Panel Meeting Agreements, June 4, 2010

Revised Operating Guidelines

Western Region CRP Action Plan – chart

Update: NYS CRP Recommendations

NYS OCFS 2009 Response to the Report and Recommendations of the NYS Citizen Review Panels

2010 Report Timeline

Updated legislative chart

Minutes of the March 12, 2010 meeting

Judge Buchanan opened the meeting with an overview of the court's work on behalf of children and families involved in the juvenile justice system, their education and service needs and similarities to the child welfare system. Closing the Gap remains a successful model with services located in six schools addressing attendance problems. The services offered range from counseling and afterschool programming to nutrition services. The System of Care model developed in Buffalo to meet the needs of children and youth who were diverted from court when PINS legislation was revised is now receiving national attention. This model could be useful in meeting the needs of those youth who are named in education neglect cases. The model utilizes a team from Social Services, Probation and Mental Health to evaluate a child and family and to develop a service plan before a court appearance. The goal is to divert cases from coming into court at all. In the past, the court saw 1,000 cases; now the number has stabilized at 500 per year. They have reduced the detention population by over 600 children and reduced the number of days in care by over 10,000. The courts now do 6 month placements and begin services on the first day of care. Reducing the number of days in care realized a savings of \$4,000,000. The

funding was used to increase wrap-around services, family functional therapy, multi-systemic therapy and substance abuse and mental health treatment.

Judge Buchanan developed a pilot program with the Joan A. Male center to address educational neglect reports in which youth choose not to attend school. With traditional education neglect cases, services would be in place to mediate the effects of the neglect experienced. With this select group of cases, they found that the parent was exercising his or her responsibility but the student was still not attending school. Services were needed to address the education deficits of each youth. The pilot program offers remediation and is seeing success. They plan to extend the pilot to earlier grades. He is interested in evaluating whether or not the gains realized in the pilot are sustained over time.

He discussed his concerns with the Vera Institute reports by stating that each case is different from another. He expressed concern with the age of 13 as a cutoff for making education neglect reports, the lack of services for these youth if they are not served by the child welfare system, and the need to address educational deficits. The goal is to prevent cases from becoming involved with the courts by increasing access to preventive services. He discussed the court's limitations. As a judge he can only order an educational evaluation, not services. He expressed difficulties with education files not following children to a new school.

Renee Hallock, OCFS Director, Child and Family Services Review, presented data packets that OCFS is using with local departments of social services to discuss practice improvements in child welfare. Each county was asked to select a family engagement strategy to use to impact permanency and child safety. Practice questions are also presented with the data to help counties understand where improvements may be made. The data packets are updated and reviewed every six months for progress towards goals. Counties were encouraged to share the data with their local courts, service providers and other stakeholders. New electronic tools are available to assist in training, coaching and improving skills in family engagement.

Panel members received an overview of the decisions made at the June Joint Panel meeting and discussed possible recommendations to bring to the October Joint Panel meeting. They agreed on three recommendations to discuss at the October meeting. They also agreed to focus their work plan on addressing education neglect.