

WCRP
Minutes of the Meeting
May 9, 2014

Attendees:

Ellen Kennedy	Stefan Perkowski	Dennis Walczyk
Paula Mazur	Melissa Cavagnarro	Sarlyn Tate

Guests:

Mary McCarthy	Commissioner Carole Dankert-Maurer
Brian Bray	Roberta Farkas-Huezo
Gavin Kasper	

OCFS Staff: Lisa Gordon, by phone

SCAA Staff: Diane Mastin

Handouts:

Agenda

National Child Welfare Workforce Institute: A Comprehensive Workforce Strategy to Advance Child Welfare Outcomes

Child Welfare Workforce Development Framework

The Buffalo News.com Opinion, Another Voice: Some reforms of Child Protective Services could put children at risk by Melanie Blow, April 22, 2014.

List of legislation proposed by Erie County Executive Poloncarz

S6926 (Gallivan) /A9225 (Zebrowski)

371-b of the Laws of New York State

422-a of the Social Services Law of New York State

OCFS CPS Manual, Section B 10, pages 35 – 40.

SCAA News Blast: Last Look: NYS Budget 2014-15

WCRP membership list

2014 Child Welfare Legislation, “Same as” Bills

2014-15 NYS Human Services Budget

2014-15 TANF Program Funding chart

Commission to Eliminate Child Maltreatment Fatalities Holds First Meeting, Feb. 26, 2014.

Accessed at <http://www.socialworkblog.org/advocacy/2014/02/commission-to-eliminate-child-maltreatment-fatalities-holds-first-meeting/>

Smith, E.G., McCarthy, M. E., and Dineen, M. (2014). Income Inequality and Child Maltreatment in the United States. *Pediatrics*. Accessed at

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2014/02/04/peds.2013-1707>

SCAA: Family Assessment Response (FAR) 2014 fact sheet

Minutes of the March 13th meeting

Mary McCarthy, Director of the Social Work Education Consortium at the School of Social Welfare, SUNY Albany and Co-Principal Investigator for the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, provided information regarding work at the national level to make improvements in child welfare for the workforce. The Children’s Bureau, through the Workforce Institute, has

identified 11 university partnership sites across the country to work comprehensively in 12 states and intensively in 3 states to build a comprehensive approach to workforce development and to test and track impacts on the child welfare workforce. Recruitment and retention strategies, workloads, education levels, training and supportive work cultures will be important to this work.

Building the skills of the child welfare workforce will be key to gaining improvements in outcomes for children and families. Some of the challenges include a lack of data, lack of workload standards, high turnover, vicarious trauma, and lack of incentives for performance. States are now being asked to provide workforce data as part of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).

In New York State, work continues in various counties throughout the state through intensive training and coaching to build supervisors' skills to support caseworkers to develop a planned approach to their meetings with families. Dr. McCarthy cited work being done in Alleghany County, Chemung County, New York City, and Rockland County as models.

Erie County Commissioner Carol Dankert-Maurer, Special Assistant to the Commissioner Brian Bray, Child Protective Services Director Roberta Farkas-Huezo and Assistant Commissioner of Services Gavin Kasper met with panel members to provide information related to practice changes in Erie County. Commissioner Dankert highlighted the work the department of social services conducted over the past year to identify and reform child welfare practices in the county. The county hired new caseworkers, a data expert to analyze data to inform practice, a quality assurance coordinator, and several domestic violence advocates to work in collaboration with CPS workers. The work included a review of all policies and practices, a specific focus on chronic neglect reports, co-location of caseworkers, building community engagement and partnerships, and changes to allow flexibility on the part of workers to work from home or in the court room as needed using technology tools provided by the department. In addition, caseworkers and supervisors received one-on-one coaching and have an individualized plan for improvement which identifies their strengths and weaknesses. The department will offer training to further develop caseworker skills not addressed by the core training offered through OCFS.

Challenges remain. Caseloads are very high (averaging 50) and will likely continue at that level for another year. Caseworkers are fearful of making a mistake that will result in their name headlined in the media. Civil Service exams are not offered enough and results pose another challenge in keeping the workers they have already hired and trained. Some are their best workers. They currently have 52 provisional staff. Starting salaries are low.

The County Executive in Erie County proposed 19 bills for consideration by the State legislature this session. Advocacy is needed to pass the bills.

Panel members received updates on panel members, confidentiality rules, and the June 13th Joint Panel meeting. They agreed to meet at 9:30 before the Joint Panel meeting in an executive session.