

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Meeting
DRAFT MINUTES
July 14, 2006
3800 Homer Adams Parkway, Alton, IL
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
(Accepted as Written at 9/8/06 Meeting)

Members Present	Members Absent	DCFS Staff	Guests
Gladys Boyd	Donsetta Blakely	Michael Bollman	Mercedes Ball
Cecil Garner	Raymond Chasteen	Vendetta Dennis	Tonya Duke
Robyn Harvey	Claudia Dancy Davis	Gwenn Eyer	Debbie Freke
Andrea Miller	Ruth Dominguez	Ray Gates	Vallori Gates
Leanne Montgomery	Sylvia Flory	Vanessa James	Birdia Jenkins
Andre Robinson	Ruth Jajko	Jean Maher	Lisa Massa
Heather Schumacher	James Jones	Terry McGlothlin	Charlie Welenc
Uli Senz	Vicky Kline	Bill Peyton	Jerry Welenc
Antionette Walker	Ramon Nieves	Judy Zaleski	
Adrienne Welenc			
Mary White			
Geraldine Wilson			

Hospitality

Mary White welcomed members and guests, announcing that the meeting would be recorded to assure accurate minutes.

Welcome and Introductions

Uli Senz, SWFCAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Uli welcomed new members and stated that new appointees who have not yet received their official appointment letter from the Director should participate in the meeting, asking questions, gaining information, etc. They do not yet, however, hold voting privileges. Uli asked each member, new appointee and guest to introduce himself/herself to the Council.

OLD BUSINESS

Minutes from May 19, 2006 Meeting

Uli asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes from the May 19th meeting. There were none.

MOTION: *Mary White moved to accept the 05/19/06 minutes. Andrea Miller seconded. The motion carried and the minutes were accepted as written.*

FINAL REPORTS TO THE DIRECTOR

There were no final reports to the Director. Uli explained that as chair of the Council he is responsible for submitting a monthly report to the Director and that a copy of the July report is provided in the packet. He stated that in the future the agenda item for final reports should also

include committee reports to go to the Director, as these reports will need to be approved by the Council before moving forward.

AAC/YAB/CWAC Reports - Bridgette Glickman

Uli stated, in Bridgette's absence, that Bridgette's written report begins on page 10 of members' packets. Uli explained that these regular reports keep the SWFCAC connected with other groups working toward similar goals.

Regional Reports

Uli asked regional representatives to report on their experience in regional councils.

Central Region – No report; their last meeting was rescheduled.

Cook Central – This council had two speakers at their last meeting. A representative of Health Works discussed medical issues, and a supervisor of the Cook County Adoption Unit addressed adoption issues. A couple of weeks ago they held their COA accreditation celebration. It was noted that they are the only DCFS region that went through the process in an expedited manner.

Cook South – This council has a newly elected chair and is utilizing support from DCFS management in working toward rejuvenating the council. They are planning a joint picnic August 3rd. They will begin their regular meeting schedule in September.

Northern Region – This group is also coming back to life. They meet the third Tuesday of every month. Their most recent program dealt with HIV/AIDS issues.

Cook North – No report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Committee - Jerry Welenc

Uli explained the work and design of the Policy Committee. Jerry stated that the committee is working on proposed changes to the Foster Parent Law, changes to the agency review process and revisions to the questions utilized during the agency reviews. A new list of questions has been developed and will be finalized by the committee at their next meeting. They have also rearranged the protocol used to select sites to be monitored as we enter the new cycle of reviews. The committee also discussed changing the number of foster parent surveys required, promoting a plan to base the number on the number of homes served by the agency.

Andrea Miller suggested that the committee consider a way to utilize Council members to do the POS surveys as they do the DCFS surveys. Jerry explained the rationale for the way the protocol was initially developed and suggested that the Council address it as a whole, if desired. Options addressed included mailing surveys to people, providing an 800 number for them to call and reply, using ACR's to gather the information, and listing the agencies being reviewed in the newsletter and asking foster parents to call for a survey if interested. After much discussion, the topic was referred back to the Policy Committee.

Vanessa suggested offering an incentive program for survey completion. Jerry stated that the discussion of the comments section on the survey forms and the protocol for completion of the surveys needs to be addressed at the next committee meeting, indicating that they will train APT staff when procedural plans are finalized.

Ray will ask for a meeting with Terry Weck and Treva Hamilton regarding increasing the number of foster parent interviews, APT working flex time calling foster parents in evenings, and to set up a time to train APT.

Ray stated that we would use one of the fall SWFCAC meetings to train members on the review process, particularly focusing on proper completion of the final assessment.

Adolescent Issues/ Statewide Youth Advisory Board Liaison - Andrea Miller

Andrea discussed the makeup of the Statewide Youth Advisory Board, highlighting issues that are important to them, and stating that their next meeting will be the combined SWFCAC/SYAB meeting in September. Andrea stated that her committee service has included an appointment to the Governor's Sibling Rights Task Force and stated that she will need to be replaced as chair of this committee since her membership term has expired. Ray said that Andrea would maintain the Governor appointed position even though she will no longer be on the council.

Archives - Ray Chasteen

Jerry Welenc reported that no additional work has been done on the archives and requested support from council members, as the Archive Committee work is very labor intensive. (The committee is tasked to produce a history of the SWFCAC.) This committee will need to be assigned a new chair since Ray Chasteen is going off the council. In addition, council members should be involved as active committee members, contributing time in-person to do the work. Mary White suggested that since the next meeting begins later in the day, materials should be transported to Peoria for a work group to sort that morning. This committee will be asked to provide quarterly reports to the Council. Ray gates will facilitate a conference call with Mary & Jerry and report back next meeting.

System of Care/SASS – Claudia Davis

Uli described the work of the committee, including the collaboration between DCFS, DHS and DHFS (formerly DPA) indicating that one purpose is to ensure close monitoring of SASS. He stated that a lot of the discussions are around billing issues and SASS functioning and stated that SASS is designed to really evaluate the need for psychiatric hospitalizations. He described some work done by one of the workgroups regarding the utilization of a Family Resource Developer, stating that these FRD's are similar to Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS's) in that they are experienced and able to mentor and advise those going through the process at this time. When asked, Uli stated that there is really no connection currently between System of Care (SOC) and SASS. Bill Peyton, Southern Region RA, answered a question regarding the use of SOC in the Southern Region, stating that in most cases SOC services are provided without major problems. SASS is a crisis intervention program and SOC is designed more to stabilize placements, supporting the family before situations become a crisis.

Foster Parent Support Specialists - Vicky Kline

Adrienne reported in Vicky's absence. She thanked the council for supporting their work in gaining the 3% COLA for Foster Parent Support Specialists.

PA92-0295 School Records Act – Mary White

Jerry Welenc spoke regarding the Policy Committee work on this issue, stating that the council has asked Dana Yowell, DCFS Chief Legislative Liaison, to work on the issue. Ray Gates reported that Dana is working with a representative from ISBE in an effort to remedy the issues the council has brought forward. He stated that she would continue to report to the council as work progresses. Jerry Welenc stated that a first priority would be to repeal the law, but Ray indicated that there is little to suggest that it will happen. Jerry suggested that council representatives contact Sharon Freagon to invite her involvement in this issue. The problems include the following: (1) the law required that the records are submitted to the schools and these records are not protected at all schools; (2) some schools are aware of the requirements and others are not and (3) the records are not being retrieved as required by law. (Record retrieval refers to cases overturned on appeal, unfounded, or the child moves to another school.) Ray suggested that Terry McGlothlin should forward a copy of the law to whomever the chair appoints to work on this internally. Jerry stated that it might just be as simple as verifying the utilization of the law as written.

Next Steps:

- (1) Request regular reports from ISBE regarding their implementation of the law and compliance with the law.
- (2) Request a report from DCFS to provide documentation of their retrieval methods.
- (3) Gather information from DCFS Operations as to what happens when youth move from school to school.
- (4) Ray will convene a conference call with the committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Southern Region Council Organization and Implementation Plan Development

Uli welcomed Bill Peyton, Southern Regional Administrator, and Michael Bollman, the Southern Region Advisory Council Co-chair. Bill stated that during the last year they have tried to figure out a way to get more involvement in the development of their implementation plan and were very successful last year. However, this year, due to the reorganization, they have not been quite so successful. They offer two meetings each year at sites foster parents can reach within an hour's drive time, using conferencing capabilities to address joint agenda issues. They utilize the third meeting of the year (August) to name a committee to work on the actual Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. Bill and Michael reviewed the plan to determine exactly what they're doing in order to write a truly reflective annual report. Next they divided narratives into groups and formed subcommittees to review each section. Finally, they utilized their committee as a large group to meet to review and revise the plan point-by-point during a one-day meeting. They have added vignettes to their training, asking participants to determine which rights and responsibilities applied to each. He stated that this training was well received.

Bill stated that the Southern Region was impacted a great deal by the recent DCFS reorganization and asked Michael Bollman to address some of the changes that are coming up, focusing on training issues.

Michael stated that many of the field offices have regular staff/foster parent meetings. He indicated that this fall they would utilize the vignettes in these training situations that will be placed throughout the region. This year they are really focusing on placing these meetings in

areas accessible to foster parents. They anticipate holding approximately six meetings in the East St. Louis area and two meetings in the northern part of the Marion area. Foster parent participants receive training credit for these meetings. Bill will provide copies of the vignettes to Ray for distribution.

WORKING LUNCH

Foster/Adopt PRIDE Training Modules – Judy Zaleski and Jean Maher

Judy stated that an article in volume two of the *Illinois Families Now and Forever* newsletter describes the new Child Trauma Training. This program came out of the Domestic Violence Training Initiative and is now being handled by the Office of Training so that it more fully reflects the training needs of our Department, providing a more enhanced focus for our audience. They are working to tie it together with other Department initiatives (present and upcoming). Training will probably still continue to roll out as scheduled, starting in late September. This program is designed to co-train foster parents, DCFS staff and POS partners concurrently. Judy discussed several options they are considering and asked for comments.

Suggestions for implementation:

- (1) Provide it in a conference setting.
- (2) Provide training credit for both staff and foster parents.
- (3) Break it down from the two-day session into shorter sessions.
- (4) Provide trainings locally.
- (5) Provide roles for both staff and foster parent serving as trainers.

Judy distributed and discussed the handout, *Briefing on Foster Parent Training Contracts*, noting that the community college functions are being consolidated into one administrative center, in order to devote more funds to pure training. She noted that the new Virtual Training Center opened July 13th.

Ray thanked both Judy and Jean for participating in the meeting today and for their willingness to keep the SWFCAC in the loop regarding training issues.

Update Subcommittee Lists – Council

Uli stated his goal to have committees that are proactive. He suggested the council focus on setting goals and determining ways to impact policy and promote new initiatives rather than just developing subcommittees in a reactionary way. The committee list was updated and will be sent to all council members for discussion at the next meeting.

MOTION: Andrea Miller moved to discontinue the SASS and SOC subcommittee. Robyn Harvey seconded and the motion carried.

Uli suggested a legislative subcommittee, and council members were supportive of the idea. Ruth Jajko was recommended to serve as Chair of the Legislative Committee. Terry will check with Ruth to see if she is willing to serve in this capacity. Heather Schumacher and Jerry Welenc also agreed to serve on this committee.

Other possible subcommittees suggested for future consideration were Recruitment, and Training.

Suggested Topics for September Meeting with Youth

Uli will contact Cindy Brunger regarding SYAB agenda issues.

Report from the Office of Foster Parent Support Services - Ray Gates

Presentation

Ray began by honoring Andrea Miller, an outgoing Council member. He presented her with a plaque for her service on the council from November 2000 through June 2006.

Conflict of Interest

Ray distributed the Conflict of Interest Precaution forms and asked that any council member with a DCFS contract must complete and sign the form. Signed forms must be on file in order for members with DCFS contracts to be reimbursed on SWFCAC travel status.

SWFCAC Law Revisions

Ray said that Dana Yowell and Shelly Knuppel studied the council's proposed changes. They emailed the recommendations to the Director and Velma Williams. Director Samuels to go ahead if there are no political or legal reasons not to. Dana will introduce at the Spring session.

Birth Parent Council

Ray distributed brochures from the new Birth Parent Council. This Council came out of the federal review and issues that were identified regarding effectively communicating with birth parents. It also addresses the Department's renewed focus on reunification. This group offers birth parents the opportunity to impact the way the Department does business and will review policy, practices and resources, advising the Department in a way similar to the other Councils. Ray said that the Clinical Division has established a Cook County birth parent council that is called Partnering with Parents. (The Council includes birth parents that are currently or have been involved with the Department.) Ray stated that he anticipates starting another group downstate soon. In addition, there may be spin-off support groups throughout the state. He described the kick-off event and mentioned the Birth Parent Information Fair held June 28th from 3:00p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at 6201 South Emerald. Ray said that he would be meeting via phone with downstate RA's to begin planning for a downstate birth parent event.

Caregiver Institutes

Ray said that planning has begun for the 2007 Caregiver Training Institutes. Gwenn Eyer is working on locations for the trainings to be held between mid-February to late April, in 9 locations around the state. The focus of the trainings will be reunification. Ray said that evaluations from last year's institutes indicated a strong support for youth participation, so youth will again be asked to participate.

COLA for Adoption Subsidies – Question from IFAPA – Gladys Boyd, IFAPA President

Since the House Bill passed providing a 3% COLA for foster parents, Gladys stated that she had been hearing questions regarding the opportunity to apply the increase to adoptive parents. She stated that she'd been told that DCFS Legal was unable to find a precedent for doing it. Gladys

sent a follow-up letter to the Director and said that nine days after a copy of procedure 302 was provided to the Director a letter was distributed indicating that they were working to change the DCFS policy. Gladys deferred to Ray because she knew that he'd had a conversation with the Director about this topic. Ray stated that he had not spoken with the Director about this question. Ray added that he was told that the legislation for the foster care COLA did not fund COLAs for adoption and guardianship, and that the Department is looking into the situation.

MOTION: Antionette Walker moved that we send a message to DCFS management in support of a COLA increase for adoptive and guardianship parents matching the foster parent COLA in as referenced in Procedure 302. Andrea Miller seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Adrienne Welenc made the motion to adjourn. Andrea Miller seconded. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

The next meeting, a joint meeting with the Statewide Youth Advisory Board, will be held September 8 in Peoria.