



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Celebrating 26 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

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Martha Trevino Powell
Dr. Harriette F. Williams

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **July 19, 2010**, in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim accounting or transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

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|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Carol O. Biondi | Steven M. Olivas, Esq. |
| Patricia Curry | Sandra Rudnick |
| Ann Franzen | Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW |
| Susan F. Friedman | Martha Trevino Powell |
| Helen A. Kleinberg | Dr. Harriette F. Williams |
| Dr. La-Doris McClaney | |

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

| | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Rev. Cecil L. Murray | Stacey Savelle |
| Dr. Maria A. Prieto | |

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:04 a.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made.

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

▪ July 19, 2010

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner McClaney (Commissioners Murray, Prieto and Savelle being absent), the agenda for July 19, 2010, was unanimously approved with the following changes:

- Item VI (*Motion by Commissioner Curry to Approve a Letter to the Board of Supervisors regarding Youth Permanency*) was taken off calendar at the request of Commissioner Curry.

- Item VII a. (*Report by the Ad-Hoc Committee on Protocol for Fatalities for Probation Youth and motion by Commissioner Friedman to approve and send the Committee's recommendations to the Board of Supervisors*), Commissioner Friedman provided a verbal report. On motion of Commissioner Friedman, by Common Consent, the motion to approve and send the Committee's recommendations to the Board of Supervisors was referred back to the Committee.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- **June 7, 2010**

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner Kleinberg, seconded by Commissioner McClaney (Commissioners Murray, Prieto and Savelle being absent), the June 7, 2010, minutes ([copy on file](#)) were unanimously approved with the following change:

Page 7, under VII b. Roundtable Discussion on the Title IV-E Waiver and Related Children Services Programs

Sharon Watson, Ph.D. (Past Director of the Education Coordinating Council (ECC))

- **June 21, 2010**

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg (Commissioners Murray, Prieto and Savelle being absent), the June 21, 2010, minutes ([copy on file](#)) were unanimously approved with the following changes:

Page 4, second bullet under VII a. Update on the Priorities of the Probation Department

- The Probation Department needs to improve its current process of transitioning youth out of Probation. The process must begin long before youth are released to Communities. To that end, Chief Blevins wants to build a system in which re-entry or transition deputies work with youth and their families two or three months before they transition out. Additionally, similar services to those provided in camps must be made available in the communities so that youth continue to receive the same level of treatment. A school program should also be made available to every youth released from Probation. **~~The Probation Department is currently searching for an Educational Director to improve the educational services offered to youth within Probation.~~**

The Probation Department is currently searching for an Educational Director to improve the educational services offered to youth within Probation. It will review also the *Educational Redesign Plan* that has been reviewed by the Children’s Planning Council, the Education Coordinating Council, and the Board of Supervisors.

Page 7, first bullet, under *VII c. Protocol for Probation Fatalities*

- In the fall of 2009, **in a meeting with Chair Curry**, the Children’s Board Deputies suggested that the Commission draft a protocol for the Probation Department to study and keep track of youth fatalities. ~~Several Commissioners met and decided that this needed to be a collaborative effort, and subsequently, three members from the Probation Commission, as well as Mr. Dave Mitchell and Ms. Sharon Harada from the Probation Department, became part of the collaborative.~~ **Several Commissioners met with members from the Probation Commission and Mr. Dave Mitchell and Ms. Sharon Harada from the Probation Department, and decided that this needed to be a collaborative effort, subsequently forming the Protocol for Probation Fatalities Ad-Hoc Committee.**

V. CHAIR’S REPORT

Chair Curry reported that the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) recently received less than favorable media coverage. DCFS Director Trish Ploehn has been invited to the next Commission meeting scheduled for August 2, 2010, to address the issues raised by media articles, and to provide an update on the recent changes that have been implemented and are forthcoming within DCFS.

Action Taken:

Chair Curry’s verbal report was received and filed.

VI. MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CURRY TO APPROVE A LETTER TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REGARDING YOUTH PERMANENCY (Continued from the meetings of 6/7/10 and 6/21/10.)

Action Taken:

This item was taken off the calendar at the request of Commissioner Curry.

VII. PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS

- b. **Report by the Ad-Hoc Committee on Protocol for Fatalities for Probation Youth. and motion by Commissioner Friedman to approve and send the Committee’s recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.** Susan Friedman

On motion of Commissioner Friedman, by Common Consent, the motion to approve and send the Committee's recommendations to the Board of Supervisors was referred back to the Committee.

Commissioner Friedman reported the following:

- An Ad-Hoc Committee was formed comprised of Commissioners, Biondi, Kleinberg, Savelle and Curry. The committee worked with members of the Probation Commission, and Probation Department Chiefs, Ms. Sharon Harada, Juvenile Field Services Bureau and Mr. Dave Mitchell, Suitable Placement Services Bureau to offer recommendations to the Probation Department regarding their draft protocol on the reporting of youth fatalities to the Board of Supervisors.
- In the summer of 2008, the Commission's Child Fatality Committee conducted an in-depth review of five random cases of youth fatalities which revealed that many of the youth fatalities consisted of crossover youth. As a result, the Child Fatality Committee requested more information about these youths, but unfortunately the Probation Department did not keep records on youth fatalities. Subsequently, a member of the Probation Department began to collect data of the youth fatalities from the Los Angeles County Coroners Department. Unlike DCFS' protocol for the reporting of child fatalities, the Probation Department's protocol was essentially a reporting tool for Probation Department staff to report youth fatalities up the chain of command and ultimately to the Board of Supervisors, but did not require an investigation of the incident or recommendations for improvement to prevent similar occurrences.
- The Probation Department's draft protocol is currently under County Counsel's review.
- The following are the recommendations developed by the Ad-Hoc Committee:
 - Create a specific administrative review team to fully examine each fatality, to gather all information beginning with the Deputy Probation Officer, collateral contacts from other departments (i.e. DCFS, DMH), and to include consultation with teachers and family. The Probation Department Staff suggest that the four Department "consultants" and a rotating Bureau Chief serve as the review team.
 - The administrative review team Report conclusions, particularly if systemic issues are identified, to the Board of Supervisors, Justice and Children's Deputies in 30-60 days

- Improve collection and retention of documentation for youth.
For example, if the youth threatened suicide -- what followed? If a youth required drug or alcohol treatment -- was it obtained? Was the youth in school? What kind of health services and medications were provided? Was the youth AWOL?
- Establish a log to provide a quick overview of all fatalities related information such as; age, gender, geography cause, crossover status. Review the log and submit findings to the Probation Chief every quarter.
- While the draft protocol is titled, “Juvenile High Profile Case Notification Procedures,” it should be understood that all fatalities are “high profile” and include all youth under Probation jurisdiction.
- These recommendations will be further discussed in a cluster meeting with the Chief Executive Office and the Children’s Deputies in August 2010.

Action Taken:

Commissioner Friedman’s verbal report was received and filed.

b. Disproportionality and Disparity in the Child Welfare System

**Maryam Fatemi,
DCFS**

Maryam Fatemi, Deputy Director, DCFS provided a presentation regarding Disproportionality and Disparity in the Child Welfare System titled, “Tools, Strategies and Practice Improvements for Addressing Racial Disproportionality & Disparity in Child Welfare ... A Call To Action” ([copy on file](#)), and responded to questions posed by the Commission. Co-presenters were Regional Administrators: Mr. Jonathan Byers (Pomona Service Area), Ms. Angela Parks-Pyles (Pasadena Service Area), and Mr. Stephen Sanders (Metro-North Service Area), who addressed specific strategies used in their respective Service Areas for Eliminating *Racial Disproportionality and Disparity* (ERDD). Mr. John Ansley, *Parent Partners* (Pomona Service Area), Mr. Rico Varnado, *Parent Partner* (Metro-North Service Area), and Ms. Simone Hale (Youth Representative), shared their experiences while being serviced by DCFS and their involvement in helping other individuals who transition through the DCFS system.

Ms. Fatemi reported the following:

- Based on the data represented in the “Foster Care Placement Rates by the State”, African American/Black youth are overrepresented in out-of-home care placement compared to Caucasian/White, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native. Ethnic representation in out-of-home care (Foster Care Placement Rates by State-Rate per 1,000 for 2003) within the State of California is as follows:

- Caucasian/White – 19.03
 - Hispanic/Latino (a) – 8.61
 - American Indian/Alaska Native – 18.45
 - African American/Black – 44.13
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- African American youth between the ages 0-17 residing in Los Angeles County account for approximately nine percent of the total youth population; however, 20 percent of all referrals received by DCFS are for African American youth.
 - ERDD efforts are consistent with DCFS' goals of increasing safety for all children, decreasing timelines to permanence, reducing out-of-home care, promoting child and family well-being, achieving organizational excellence, and supporting self-sufficiency.
 - In November 2008, an ERDD Policy Workgroup was convened to develop a draft ERDD protocol. The workgroup included DCFS Director Ploehn, LA County Teams, Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court, Community Partners, Attorneys, parents and Commissions. The workgroup was facilitated by Casey Family Program and Annie E. Casey consultants.

Mr. Byers reported the following:

- The Pomona Office has been at the forefront of addressing Disproportionality and Disparity. Beginning in 2005, the Pomona Office actively engaged in efforts to eliminate Disproportionality and Disparity within the African American community.
- Based on the data comparing statistics from Fiscal Year (FY) 2005/06 and 2008/09, African American youth represent approximately six percent of the population within the Pomona community, yet between years 2005 and 2009 the referral rates for African American's has remained at approximately 13 percent.
- Substantiated referrals for African American youth dropped from 13 percent FY 2005/06 to 9 percent in 2008/09. The rates in which African American youth were removed from their homes dropped from 18 percent in FY 2005/06 to 13 percent in 2008/09. African American youth who received child welfare services dropped from 25 percent in FY 2005/06 to 21 percent in 2008/09.
- The number of African American youth who were in Out-of-Home Care dropped from 3,742 in June 2006 to 2,847 in June 2009. The percent of African American youth in group homes dropped from 39 percent in June of 2006 to 29 percent in June of 2009. The overrepresentation of the African American Youth has steadily declined in the Pomona Office since 2006.

Ms. Parks-Pyles reported the following:

- African American youth in DCFS' Pasadena Service Area are:
1) overrepresented in referrals at 15 percent whereas Caucasian youth are underrepresented at 21 percent; 2) detained at more than twice the rate than Caucasian youth; 3) account for five times the caseload than the general population; 4) in foster care seven times more than in the general population. Additionally, African American youth account for 43 percent of the total number of children in group homes.
- The Pasadena Service Area partnered with *Parent Advocates*, and in 2008, the Pasadena ERDD began *The Cultural Broker Training* in Fresno, California. Cultural Broker Training demonstrated the benefits of grouping families and DCFS representatives of similar ethnic or cultural background. *The Cultural Broker Training* and *Parent Advocates* have been instrumental in addressing Disproportionality and Disparity in the African American Community in this service area.
- The Pasadena Service Area attended a Breakthrough Series Collaboration on Risk and Safety in 2008. In 2009 they attended a Breakthrough Series Collaboration on Permanency through Reunification and created the 6-4-2 Signals of Safety. The 6-4-2 sheet references the six core Departmental values staff used to focus on the most important factors when making decision about a case.
- In 2010, "Knowing Who You Are" trainings were conducted by the Pasadena Service Area and Casey Family Programs. These trainings included administrative staff, Supervising Social Workers (SCSW's), Clinical Social Workers (CSW's) and community partners.

Mr. Sanders reported the following:

- The Metro-North Service Area covers 31 zip codes with a very diverse area covering a large portion of Central Los Angeles. The African American population makes up approximately three percent of the Metro-North Service Area's population.
- Similar to the Pomona and Pasadena Service Area's, Metro-North Service Area statistics revealed that a Disproportionate number of African American families were impacted. Although African American families make up only three percent of the population in the Metro-North Service Area, they account for ten percent of all referrals.
- In 2008, the Metro-North Area launched the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) process to address Disproportionality and Disparity by conducting a total case review of African American family ER and Family Reunification cases.

- Through *Parent Advocates* and surveys, staff discovered structural or systemic barriers in the TDM process. As a result of the PDSA, changes have been made to the TDM process making it more client-friendly.
- The PDSA revealed there is no method of tracking families by ethnicity. Consequently, all Departmental forms were immediately changed to include a category for race/ethnicity.
- In addition, PDSA's also revealed that African American family's felt intimidated by the TDM process resulting in parents feeling defensive and not being capable of demonstrating their parenting strengths during the TDM meetings. Thus the TDM process was changed to engage the families and inform them about the processes as well as possible outcomes.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Fatemi and Ms. Parrish added the following:

- There is an ongoing effort to address Disproportionality and Disparity not only in groups that are overrepresented, but throughout.
- DCFS has done a great job releasing children back into their homes. From 2008 to 2010, out-of-home placements have decreased from 2,000 to 900. The decrease can be attributed to the TDM process and Permanency Units. Data is not currently available on re-entry due to Disproportionality, however, DCFS may present this information at a future meeting.
- In partnership with the Department of Social Services (DPSS), DCFS used Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to expand the Parent Partners from 18 to 31 in 2010. There are currently a total of 31 *Parent Partners* in various Service Areas.

Action Taken:

The Commission received and filed the report by Ms. Fatemi and presenters.

c. Title IV-E Waiver Status Update

**Lisa Parrish,
DCFS**

Ms. Parrish reported the following:

- DCFS is in the eleventh month Budget Report and is ready to close out the 2009/10 budget this summer. The projected amount of accumulated dollars under the capped allocation is \$24.6 million. DCFS is projecting that \$17 million of the \$24.6 million will be generated at the close of 2009/10. The remainder coming from an accumulation of unspent funds from previous years.

- DCFS has created a list of programs and services which they hope can be funded by reinvestment dollars.
- *Cultural Brokers, Parents in Partnerships, Permanency Units, and Foster Family Agency (FFA)* are among those programs and services that DCFS is considering to expand.
- DCFS re-entry rate has risen from 9.9 to 11.8. However, at a lower rate than that of Alameda County, whose re-entry has risen to 22 percent. The Federal standard is 9.9.
- Tier I Wraparound program case rate costs designed for youth existing DCFS are \$4,184 a month. The case rate costs for Tier II Wraparound are \$1,250 a month.
- DCFS has formally requested that the Federal Government raise the capped allocation due to the recent Group Home rate increase of 32 percent.
- Three relative caregiver support centers have been added to the existing two currently in operation. Relative Caregivers are an integral part of the formula for success.
- Reinvestment funds can be allocated for employee salaries and benefits; an exact figure used for this purpose is currently not available.

Action Taken:

The Commission received Ms. Parrish's verbal status update on the Title IV-E Waiver.

VIII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Ploehn reported she was in Washington D.C. in June 2010 to discuss a five-year extension of the Title IV-E Waiver, under the existing terms. The State of California has drafted a letter officially requesting this extension.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Ruth Craft addressed the Commission.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There was none.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Curry at 12:04 p.m.