Illinois Department of Children & Family Services
Cook Region PEP Quarterly Meeting

September 13, 2016
1911 S Indiana 10th Floor
10 am-12 pm

1. Welcome & Introductions

Attendance: *Diane Scruggs, Diane Moore, Michael Burns, Jim Gleeson, Ronald Wynn, Bob Blackwell, James Bracey, MAry Diamond, Pamela Brown, Ernest Craig, Rosie Hicks-Patton, Addie Hudson, Christy Levine, Robert Blackwell, Terry A Solomon, Sarah Agamah, Lori Wecker-Evans, Jacque Johnson, Barbara Burnette, Jackie Bright, Eddie Carrozz Jr, Amber Bernald, Lainie G Madio, Tammy Harvey, Donna Moore, Jacquie Colyer.*

1. Update

Angelo is going to have to step down as co chair due to personal reasons. Russ is no longer able to work with the Chicago Northside Safety Net. We will need to find replacements.

Minutes from last quarter meeting reviewed and approved

1. UIC and Action Team Reports
2. UIC Update- *Jim Gleeson- Sarah Agamah is taking over from Alexandra’s position and has begun to meet with the action teams and work with them on their initiatives.*
3. LAN 67- *Donna Moore and Diane Scruggs- The AT gave an update on the work that LAN is doing to become an Immersion site. Ms Moore described the need for the Immersion site from the Westside; 10% of the children in the system are from the Westside. Ms. Scruggs shared that the LAN submitted the proposal to the director of DCFS and that a response had been received and we are waiting for the word from Pete Digre who is the one in charge of the Immersion sites. Mr. Gleeson talked about the way that LAN 67 has done an excellent job of retaining the community members that can make LAN 67 a strong safety net for families. Bob Blackwell mentioned that the data for the various LANs is on the PEP website. The original plan for the Immersion sites was to have the goals integrate with the Action Teams. Dianne wanted us to make sure that the immersion sites and action teams need to operate as one in order to have ownership of the site. Pete was supposed to be at the meeting today, but is not able to make it. Mr. Blackwell described that the language that is being used is one of inclusion and a moving away from centralization. Immersion sites should be able to be self sufficient. Bob mentioned that there is a need to reinforce the goals of the strategic plan ( the Core Practice model) The Immersion sites will have a meeting on October 17th as part of the Summit in Itasca.*
4. It Takes a Village*-not present. Sarah met with Jeff Walker and the AT is still working on the Birth Parent Orientation. The next meeting is September 19th.*
5. Progressive Partners- *James Bracey- Last meeting the LAN discussed a standardization of visitation sites across the state and how they can revitalize the community.*
6. Bob Blackwell*- The AT will be absorbed into the Immersion sites. Mr. Blackwell encouraged everyone to be at the Summit Oct 17-19, 2016. He also suggested that we have a meeting with Pete to go over the creation and implementation of the Immersion sites in Cook County. Michael Burns suggested that we have the meeting with Pete before the Summit in October. Dianne mentioned the importance of keeping the voices of the community at the forefront of integrating the AT and the Immersion Sites. The communities need to have funding and have a voice.*
7. Transformation Team- *James Bracey- This group is working on standardizing visitation rooms as well. Officers have gone to observe the areas. Research has shown that adequate standardized visiting rooms will cause higher rates of returning children home at a faster rate. The private agencies will receive letters and will also be asked to allow data to be collected. Dianne asked how the LAN is being represented in the Transformation Teams. Workgroup recommendations are to be implemented.*
8. PEP statewide Updates- *Michael Burns - St Clair, Rock Island, and Cairo ATs have a working relationships with their local courts. Improve transportation access to the courts. St. Clair- The action team meets regularly, and reactivating the father center in St. Louis is a priority. Speeding up Rock Island: How can we reduce the amount of time in the courtroom to be able create a more efficient process. Court Improvement project: Reimagining Permanency- looks at cases that have been in the system for 2 years. Interviews and focus groups will be conducted to improve permanency. Reduction in wait time during court, and optimizing the time that is allotted for visitation are key issues. Michael wrote a proposal to increase support for Family Advocacy Center in Cairo, and they have a $50,000 contract that they can use for the community. Recommendations across the state were submitted to improve the transformation team including free tuition for youth in care that are at state schools. A booklet is being developed for helping children understand why they are in care. Fatherhood Resource Fair in Joliet is October 29th 9am-1pm.*
9. Jacque Colyer- *General Administrator for Cook County- New Immersion sites are most likely going to be operating 9 months from now. Child Protection has been the main focus for this year, PEP will be the next area of focus. Ms. Colyer also mentioned that Switchboard is a good resource for ATs.*

 VI. Announcements

Pre-session for the Summit will also include a dialogue on race and the child welfare system on 10/17.

Michael made people aware of the updates to the PEP website

VII. Adjournment