



CWAC Racial Equity Practice Subcommittee Meeting

MINUTES

Meeting Held at the DCFS Bloomington Field Office on January 25, 2017, 10:00am – 2:00pm

Co-Conveners: Darrin Holt and Robert Blackwell

Members Present: Karima Douglas, Elke Hansen, Jacalyn Herbert-Townsend, Kathleen Lutz, Jere Murry and Susan Stephens.

Also Attending: Gail Simpson – Central Region Transformation Team Co-convener, Naomi Tjelmm-Kaplan – ICOY Intern and Jen Florent – DCFS Office of Communications.

I. Introductions

II. Check In and Reflections

III. CWAC/General Updates

- **CWAC Ad Hoc Immersion Site Advisory Group Report:** Provided by Bob Blackwell
- **Subcommittee Addition to Permanency Enhancement Project Website:** Bob Blackwell indicated that information regarding the CWAC Racial Equity Practice Subcommittee has recently been added to the Department’s Permanency Enhancement Project Website. The website currently provides broad and detailed information on the history, purpose and activities related to the Departments’ efforts to address race-based disproportionality and disparities.

Information related to the Racial Equity Practice Subcommittee includes the committees’ Charter; Membership list; Notice of Meetings and Minutes from meetings held. Jen Florent, Office of Communications provided a brief walkthrough of the website.

- **2016-2021 Strategic Plan – A Racial Equity Review:** Bob Blackwell provided each member with a bound copy of the “Illinois Child Welfare Transformation – 2016-2021 Strategic Plan”. All sections of this document directly related to Race and the Department’s efforts and/or plans to address race-based disparities, justice and/or racial equity issues in the Illinois Child Welfare practice have been yellow-highlighted. Bob recommended that all members make themselves familiar with the document and its equity provisions for strategic and leveraging purposes.

IV. Committees

A. Campaign Committee (Workgroup) – Bob Blackwell

- **Purpose:** A review of the Racial Equity Practice Subcommittee’s Charter was provided: *“Ensuring that Illinois supports a race-informed Child Welfare System by embedding racial equity principles and values into ongoing trainings/practice/policy”*. We then discussed the Committee’s annual goal for Fiscal Year 2017.

That singular goal for the year reads: *Goal 1 – Establish a campaign for FY17 among stakeholders (front-line staff, supervisors, management, DCFS, POS, Courts, law enforcement, educators, foster parents, advocates, etc.) to educate, promote and encourage greater awareness and understanding of racial equity and the impact of existing racial inequities in the Illinois Child Welfare Practice/System.*

- **Member Assignments:** Team members volunteering to participate on the Campaign Workgroup include: Dennette Derezotes
Karima Douglas
Daniel Fitzgerald
Kathleen Lutz
Jere Murry
Susan Stephens

Bob Blackwell will convene the first (1st) meeting of the Campaign Workgroup within the next few weeks. At that time a Workgroup Chair will be established and a work plan begun.

- **Ad Hoc participation:** It was noted that individuals who are not members of the CWAC Racial Equity Practice Committee, particularly Regional Transformation Team and Permanency Action Team members and other individuals with interest and expertise are invited to join this workgroup. Interested parties should be referred to Darrin Holt, Bob Blackwell and the Chair (to be established) of the workgroup.
- **Overview of 9 Week Permanency Campaign:**
Jennifer Florent, Office of Communications

Ms. Florent provided those present with technical advice on various elements of an educational campaign and an example of the Department's "9 Weeks of Permanency" Campaign in 2016. Jen walked the group through a short "mock-up" of a campaign focused on Race and Equity titled ***"9 Weeks of Engagement: From Color Blind to Color Brave"***. Attached



CWAC Racial Equity
Practice Mock Campai

It was generally discussed that by utilizing the D-Net in some "attention-getting" and "attention –retaining" way, that it might provide the best kickoff for a system-wide educational campaign. There was discussion about what must be the hallmarks of such a campaign. Important characteristics referenced included: Systems-based as opposed to individual-based; Integrative with Department practice and direction (e.g., B.H. Consent, Immersion Sites, etc.); Generative of Racial Equity and improved outcome expectations and; Value -driven.

It was also noted that the campaign and its messaging could serve other purposes to include recruitment of individuals, teams and institutions (POS) into all aspects of addressing race-based disparities (e.g., equity working groups, local action teams and institutional transformation teams).

Ms. Florent has also agreed to provide the campaign workgroup with ongoing technical assistance from the Office of Communications. The team was quite appreciative of her technical support, functional literacy and comfort level in engaging in the complex areas of bias, racism and social equity.

B. Policy Review Committee (Workgroup) – Darrin Holt

- **Purpose:** The subcommittee has also established a Policy Review Workgroup. Darrin Holt led the discussion by indicating the importance of applying a "Racial Equity Lens" to select policy and practice matters that may directly and disparately impact the outcomes of children and families of color in our child welfare system. He also outlined a direct relationship between the Child Welfare Advisory Council (CWAC), CWAC Racial Equity Practice Subcommittee and the three (3) Regional Transformation Teams. Each of these entities are concerned with policies and practices that affect child welfare and the quality of outcomes for children and families of color in the Illinois System.

Each of the three (3) Regional Transformation Teams will have a representative on the Policy Review Workgroup. It was determined by Darrin and Bob that the current members of the Racial Equity Practice Subcommittee that represent the Cook, Central and Southern Region Transformation Teams would be designated members of this

Policy Review Workgroup. Bob is currently working with the Transformation Teams to re-establish standing Policy Review committees to support this plan.

The members of the Policy Review Workgroup will include:

April Curtis
Elke Hansen (Southern Region Transformation Team)
Jacalyn Herbert-Townsend
Maria Miller (Central Region Transformation Team)
Cassandra Rogers-Lampkin (Cook Region Transformation Team)
Cole Thompson

- **Methodology:** The specific methodology and processes that will be utilized by this workgroup in the selection, examination and recommendations on selected policies and practices will be determined by the workgroup and its collaboration with the Transformation Teams and CWAC.

Darrin Holt will convene the first (1st) meeting of the Policy Review Workgroup within the next few weeks. At that time a Workgroup Chair will be established and a work plan begun.

- **Ad Hoc participation:** It was noted that individuals who are not members of the CWAC Racial Equity Practice Committee, particularly Regional Transformation Team and Permanency Action Team members and other individuals with interest and expertise are invited to join this workgroup. Interested parties should be referred to Darrin Holt, Bob Blackwell and the Chair (to be established) of the workgroup.

- V. **Open Agenda/Next Agenda Input:** The group decided to invite Director Sheldon, Zack Schrantz and Tricia Fox (CWAC Co-Conveners) to our April meeting to engage them in the plans of the subcommittee and have them speak to their understandings, expectations and support of addressing race-based disparities in the Illinois Child Welfare System. We would also extend that agenda and invitation to Mr. Mathew Grady and Melissa Riddle, Co-Chairs of the CWAC Administration and Finance Committee under which the Racial Equity Practice Subcommittee operates.

Respectfully Submitted by Robert Blackwell

Next Meeting April 26, 2017