

Statewide Advisory Council Minutes

4/1/19

Attendees: Myke Halpin, Lorna Grivois, Sarah Lockery, Dr. Regina Moeller, Dr. Elisabeth Cannata, Marie Mormile-Mehler, Deb Kelleher, Jennifer Nadeau, Dr. Damion Grasso, Suprena Shuler, Ken Mysogland

Guest: Commissioner Vanessa Dorantes, Steve Cotton, Jayo Richardson, Anderson Curtis

Department of Children and Families Overview

- Commissioner Vanessa Dorantes provided an overview and update regarding the Department of Children and Families
- DCF is the second most racially diverse state agency
- Commissioner is emphasizing bringing forth the parent voice, ensuring the “human” in human services and lifting up communities
- Collaboration amongst other state agencies and our partners, contracted and private, is a key piece of the work which must be ongoing
- Main focus will be on racial justice, timely permanency and vulnerable populations
- Vision for the Statewide Advisory Council and Regional Advisory Councils was discussed. The Systems Program Directors should have more of a role in the local communities and in their relationships with partners

Bureau of External Affairs Overview

- Ken Mysogland is the new Bureau Chief
- Bureau is comprised of the Office of the Ombudsman, Legislation and Communications
- Focus is on developing relationships with external entities
- Positive messaging via the media is key to the Department changing the image.
- Partners should expect consistent e-mails, documents and other forms of communication to maintain knowledge of current Agency activities
- Potential for listening tours with families such as what FAVOR conducted in the past
- Listening forums with the educational community are important including the PTO/PTA groups

Legislation Update

- The “DCF Oversight Committee” was proposed although it may change to be a Child Welfare Oversight Committee”. The Department would prefer a greater focus on the system for children and not solely on the Agency.
- Proposal to move parts of the Voluntary Services System to Beacon Health has been proposed
- Statewide Advisory Council to receive regular updates on the budget and members could provide testimony as requested

List of Current SAC Members and Openings

- A list of current Statewide Advisory Council members and open positions was provided
- Discussion occurred regarding outreach to prospective members

Retreat Planning

- The Retreat will be held on June 20, 2019 most likely in Westbrook
- Transitional youth could be a focus area as well as the strategic plan and racial justice
- Regions could be asked to come up with common themes in their work and then address collectively at the retreat
- Greater planning will occur at the May and June SAC meetings

SAC Housekeeping and Schedule

- Next meeting is on May 6th 2019
- The application for Statewide Advisory Council membership was passed out and reviewed
- The Governor's Office would like one standardized form to conduct background checks on individuals who wish to serve on a particular board or committee
- It is understood that some individuals who have been nominated may have had issues in the past they do not wish to include in a document which may be public
- A re-working of the Governor's document to condense the questions according to relevant topic was reviewed

Regional Advisory Council Updates

- Due to time constraints, updates were not provided