



FINAL

DHS Children, Adults and Families
Child Welfare Advisory Committee
Future Issues Work Group
August 1, 2006

ATTENDING

Nancy Miller, Pam Patton, Judy Stiegler, Mickey Serice, Mike Balter

MINUTES

The minutes of the June 26, 2006, meeting were approved with the following changes:

- Page 2, 6th bullet: Insert “placements” at the end of the sentence.
- Page 5, 1st bullet: Delete second sentence.
- Page 5, 4th bullet: Replace with “Cited the ORS mandate (ORS 419B.100) outlining the courts’ authority to establish jurisdiction and place children in DHS custody.”

PRINCIPLES DOCUMENT

- Stiegler: We took the idea of creating overarching principles in foster care from a broad discussion started during the June 26 FIWG meeting. It was honed down during the July 12 CWAC meeting and narrowed further by Nancy Miller for today’s discussion.
- Miller: The final document will be printed on CWAC letterhead. She wrote today’s draft considering what each CWAC member would agree to share with a legislator. It is written in a way that can be shared with legislators by individual CWAC members and is meant to include statements that all CWAC members can agree to. Anecdotes could be added to the backside of the document. She tried to create something that CWAC, with its diverse perspectives, could say is important. CWAC has not seen this draft yet.
- Stiegler: CWAC booted the task for developing guiding principles to FIWG. The Legislative Subcommittee was assigned the task of adding in the details / the plan of action.
- Miller: She changed the title from Judy’s first draft to “Principles for Foster Care Reform” because that is what we are responding to. Such principles are different than what we would list as principles for the foster care system.
- Stiegler: This takes into account that we have multiple players with multiple interests and have come to a common set of principles we can all stand behind. It won’t cover every issue individual members have concerns about.
- Miller: As we get into a discussion about the draft, we first need to ask if we even like the idea.

- Balter: We need to go back to what it is we are trying to do. He suggested these be principles for child welfare reform. We could lay these principles over foster care reform. This draft is close to where we need to go to have a framework to lay over any discussion. As we ask these test questions against any system change, if the change falls outside these principles we would recommend against it. Suggested adopting these guiding principles and trying them on other issues CWAC has discussed such as homeless and runaway youth and alcohol and drug abuse.
- Miller: We also need to talk about whether or not CWAC wants to send strong messages to the legislature. Last session, the House Committee on Child Welfare made a decision to not talk about resources. However, we cannot talk productively about system changes without talking about resources.
- Patton: Suggested replacing “foster care system” with “child welfare system” in the title and throughout the document.
- Stiegler: Suggested title: Principles for Child Welfare System Changes.
- Balter: We may want to think about having two principles documents, one specific to foster care and another to the child welfare system. We could give CWAC a feel for driving it from the big picture and from the smaller foster care system.
- Miller: These are not principles for the system but for reform. It needs to be child welfare reform.
- Stiegler: The word reform connotes a negative idea. Does not agree with Mike’s idea of two principles documents.
- All: There was agreement to change it to be principles for child welfare system change.
- Miller: CWAC is a CAF advisory committee. We need to think about how it would be to have this document in each CWAC member’s hands.
- Serice: This is so broadly written it will work for any child welfare agency.
- All: There was discussion about concerns in labeling children such as using the term “at risk children” in the 4th bullet. There are also concerns about saying “all children” without a qualifier because of the current attention on citizenship requirements.
- Serice: Do we want to add a bullet about parents and their responsibilities?
- Balter: Yes, otherwise we are saying parents are not important.
- Miller: It is easy to point fingers at the child welfare agency when terrible cases happen, but it is important to remember that parents can do terrible things to

their children. We also need to recognize that children's ties to their parents are very strong and important.

- All: A bullet about the parental relationship and about holding parents accountable for the safety and welfare of their children was added.
- Stiegler: We will use these draft guiding principles to react to the legislature's foster care system changes. We can create a collective set of recommendations for consideration. Asked if such an effort is worth trying.
- Miller: The principles document needs to be written in a non-standard font and printed on colored paper or heavier paper stock.

ACTION: Based on the above discussion and line-by-line editing, the draft *Principles* document was revised. The revised draft will be sent to FIWG for a review. It will be sent to CWAC prior to the September meeting.

- Balter: CWAC has bylaws, operating procedures and now principles around change. Do we also have the capacity to develop principles around the system? That companion piece is missing. We could start with what we believe children need. That should be a common agreement we could get to quickly.
- Miller: If we are CWAC, that statement would be that children need safety, permanency and well-being.
- Balter: We are missing a framework. We haven't laid out a premise.
- Patton: There is language in the Strength/Needs Based policy about valuing parents, children, attachments, etc. We could start there.
- Stiegler: We are talking about a companion statement of overarching principles.
- Miller: Suggested holding that thought to brainstorm at another meeting.
- Balter: Is not sure it will have any value. What we have today will help corral some of the system issues.
- Patton: DHS has its value statement.
- Stiegler: DHS' values cover the whole department. There are no child welfare-specific values or mission statement.
- Miller: The preamble to ORS 419 lays out Oregon's policy for children.
- Balter: Perhaps we could pull that out into bullets.
- Stiegler: We need to keep this within our role as an advisory body to DHS.
- Miller: Suggested looking at the ORS 419 preamble at a future FIWG meeting.

- Stiegler: CWAC is advisory and the guiding principles are a frame of reference for the advice the committee gives.
- Balter: We need to know the context of legislation and be able to quote the statute.
- Stiegler: We will put this on the next FIWG agenda. Contacted Rep. Gelser to ask if the House Interim Committee on Child Welfare has a meeting scheduled. Rep. Gelser replied that a meeting is not scheduled and there is still an opportunity for CWAC to have input.

ACTION: The next FIWG meeting will include time for discussion on the idea of overarching guiding principles for the child welfare system. We will begin with a review of ORS 419B.090 – preamble to ORS 419B – to see if we can convert that to a list of overarching principles. We recognize there are pieces in that ORS we may not agree with. We will discuss if this is something we want to do at the next FIWG meeting.

SEPTEMBER 12, 2006 CWAC AGENDA

- Miller: The Juvenile Rights Project's legislative concepts are big. Angela Sherbo told her that she wants to talk about them at the next Legislative Subcommittee meeting and hold another meeting for those not able to attend.
- Stiegler: She will clarify with Angela what will occur at the 8/9/06 Legislative Subcommittee meeting.
- Miller: For what purpose do we want to discuss the JRP bill at the Legislative Subcommittee? We will not reach consensus on it.
- Stiegler: It would be for information only and to decide if it should be taken to CWAC. We will have informational updates on other legislative concepts from DHS and the other Legislative Subcommittee members.
- Miller: Will DHS be seeking CWAC approval of its legislative concepts?
- Serice: Interested CWAC members are heavily involved in the development of DHS' legislative concepts. Anything that would be shared with CWAC would be for information sharing only. We plan to send the revised legislative concepts to CWAC as they become available.
- Miller: Will DHS come back to CWAC to ask for support of the concepts or are members dealing with them as individuals through their participation on the legislative concepts work groups? The purpose of having them on the agenda

needs to be clear: for information sharing, for a roundtable discussion to gather input or to get CWAC approval.

- Serice: This will be the first time during Ramona's leadership that we will be introducing legislation so we are entering new territory with this administration. We may be asking for support at a later time, but for now an agenda item for legislative concepts will be for information sharing only. Individual members who are more interested are participating in the concepts' development.

NEXT FIWG MEETING

- Miller: Would like to know when the staffing allocation study by the University of Southern Maine will be completed.
- Serice: Perhaps by the end of the summer.
- Miller: We need to look at the recommendations CWAC gave to Wayne Holder. He asked us what our concerns were and we never closed the loop to know what happened with our input to him.
- Serice: The Holder report is online and includes his recommendations.
- Miller: Asked that CWAC be updated on what DHS is doing to implement those recommendations.
- Serice: Is not sure that was a loop to close.
- Balter: As an advisory board, we ought to know. There are more things in the recommendations than the procedure manual and staff training.
- Patton: We have not been updated on training, policy and procedures. Feels uninformed about what is happening.
- Serice: Wayne Holder came to CWAC immediately when he arrived in Oregon before he did anything else.
- Miller: Wants to know whether or not Wayne Holder considered the recommendations from CWAC members.
- Stiegler: Any actions taken beyond Wayne Holder's recommendations would be a valid agenda item. Ramona can give an informational update.
- Patton: Wants a status update on all the recommendations and on what documents CWAC can have or not have. Wants it as a separate agenda item rather than as part of the Assistant Director's Report.
- Balter: We need to know what CWAC's role is regarding the Holder report. We may have the wrong expectations.
- Patton: We do need to know if Ramona wants input from CWAC or if she only want to share informational updates. There is a policy shift occurring and we are to advise on such things. It is critical that we get the information.

- Stiegler: She is hearing two things: an update on the implementation of the recommendations and a further sharing on the substantive changes to the DHS child welfare system that are happening. Agrees that we can give it more time as a separate agenda item.
- Miller: Is thinking it would go to FIWG first.
- Patton: Many questions came out of a recent tri-county child welfare advisory committee meeting. Jerry Burns provided an update to them. One concern is that the focus is moving away from prevention. Ramona and Jerry explained it in such a way that it is not as much of a systemic change as it originally sounded. However, she has concerns about how the caseworkers will interpret the change.
- Miller: If the shift is that DHS won't do prevention, then as a CWAC member and representative of the court, she has concerns about such a big system change and how the agency will meet the best interests of the child requirements. Reacting after it is implemented is not as effective as being proactive.
- Stiegler: FIWG vets issues and decides what goes to CWAC. It is reasonable to have an update to CWAC on Wayne Holder's recommendations. From that update, FIWG can take any concerns raised by the CWAC members for closer examination on whether or not they warrant a recommendation back to CWAC.
- Miller: Sees that a purpose of CWAC is to share our concerns with CAF when these types of changes are coming. However, if Ramona and Mickey do not see that as a role for CWAC, she accepts that. For example, she wants information on the staffing study, what is its purpose and what DHS hopes to get out of it.
- Serice: We requested the National Resource Center on Organizational Improvement (University of Southern Maine) to look at our structure, how it functions and to give us a report. We did not direct the NRCOI other than to look at the positions and work the do, how we are doing and what we can do better.

ACTION: Judy will ask Ramona to add an agenda item for an update on the implementation of the recommendations in the Holder report. If any issues come out of that, we will bring them back to FIWG to determine if it is something that is appropriate for CWAC to address.

- Balter: It is not clear what CWAC's role is with the Holder report. We are not a board of directors. Asked that Judy ask Ramona what her expectation is in the matter; it if to share information with CWAC or to get input from CWAC.
- Miller: If Ramona wants to use CWAC to share information about what the agency is doing that is good. We need to know if she wants any advice on the information she shares.
- Balter: Another question is whether the Holder report and its actions influence our interactions with the legislature.
- Miller: The Holder report was the birthplace of some of DHS' legislative concepts. The legislature will be talking with DHS about that during session.
- Serice: We have legislative concept work groups for that reason.
- Miller: We need to be clear about that involvement CWAC is to have. Loops are not closing on how DHS is handling our recommendations and what they are doing with the legislative concepts. If the answer is that CWAC does not have a role, she can accept that, but CWAC needs to know that.
- Stiegler: Are there things that will impact how and what CWAC deliberates?
- Serice: Having the Holder report as an informational agenda item does not close a loop.
- Miller: When information is shared, then CWAC needs to decide what to do with the information.
- Stiegler: Sometimes informational items lead to action and sometimes not. The challenge is determining which information items should come back to CWAC for loop-closing and which ones are purely for information only. Not every issue will result in action by CWAC. Nancy raises a legitimate issue that some informational items do warrant a response. Some may need only periodic reports back to CWAC. Some will create concerns that should go to FIWG to frame for recommendations to CWAC. DHS has an obligation to respond to CWAC when it does not adopt a CWAC recommendation.
- Miller: An agency response is required according to the bylaws.

ACTION: The next meeting will be scheduled in October.

Meeting adjourned.