



**DCFS Statewide Parent Advisory Council (SPAC)
September 27, 2022**

Present- Parents – Cassandra Williams, Theresa Leggins, Johnny Williams, Gregory Cox, Jacqueline LeNoir, Dorothy Jordan, Terry LeNoir

Non-Parent Members – Janelle Pulcher, Amy Chase, Rod Remolina, Javonna Smith, Tawny Fletcher

Support Staff – Michelle Grove, Ray Gates

Roll Call – Cassandra called the roll and the results are set out above.

Co-Chair Election Results – Cassandra announced that the vote was four for Gregory and two Johnny. She noted that a quorum could not be reached due to members not responding to her outreach and due to members dropping from the roll. She asked if there were any objections to accepting these results. There were none. She asked whether the members who were present were prepared to accept the election results as presented. Responses were affirmative. All congratulated new co-chair Gregory Cox, filling the two-year co-chair slot vacated by Shawna Peterman due to new job responsibilities.

Minutes – Cassandra asked if all had received and read the draft minutes of the previous meeting. It was affirmative. Then she asked for discussion, changes, or a motion to approve. There was no discussion. Motion to approve made by Dorothy, and the second was given by Gregory. All were in favor. The motion passed.

Bylaws – Cassandra asked if all had received and read the bylaws. It was affirmative. Cassandra asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve. Motion made by Johnny and seconded by Gregory. All were in favor. The motion passed and the bylaws were approved.

Membership – Ray asked for ideas to fill the empty parent membership positions on SPAC. Gregory suggested that we work with agencies and DCFS offices. Get on their meeting agendas and go speak at their meetings, making connections and explaining the need. Build a standard presentation to make at such meetings. Gregory said he will call interested parents.

Javonna said this program is in limbo and has no leadership. She added that parents have no paid supports like the foster parent support specialists who give support to foster parents. She asked what happened to the two staff we were supposed to get.

Ray explained that Ada S. McKinley had been awarded the PWP contract that provided for those two staff. They won through a publicly posted, competitive process. But after a long period of discernment, they discovered that they do not have the resources to run that statewide program, so they declined. Ray said the PWP program and SPAC will continue moving forward in spite of that, supported by the Office of caregiver and Parent Support, noting that this is the same support the foster care and adoption councils have. Ray said there is still money to support the PWP Program and SPAC. Ray added that the parent Mentor program at Ada S. McKinley has

not been affected and it will continue, noting that Ada S. McKinley continues doing a fine job with that.

Ideas discussed for increasing membership include reaching out to DCFS regional administrators and private agencies asking to be invited to meetings to discuss this need. Ray added that we can reach out to the family Advocacy Centers, as they are already serving parents. Janelle sent the list of Family Advocacy centers to Ray, and he will have Tiffany send the list to all SPAC members. Ray said there is money to reimburse SPAC members for travel expenses when they travel to meet with DCFS teams and private agencies regarding official SPAC business. Amy Chase will send contact information for interested parents to Ray, to share with SPAC.

Cassandra reviewed all her efforts calling and emailing parent members about becoming active or resigning. She stated that we now have four open slots in Northern, two in Central, and 3 in Southern regions.

The conversation segued to a disappointment with the use of the term chapter to describe local parent groups. Veteran members said they prefer the original term which was councils. Michelle Grove explained the term chapter was chosen to bring clarity. PWP local chapters are support groups that provide learning, resources and a parent voice with local DCFS management. They are lead by local DCFS staff. Council denotes a statewide leadership group, which is what the SPAC is. She said the terms can be changed if SPAC recommends doing such, but that would be involved because the chapters and SPAC are embedded throughout DCFS in policy and the PIP and in people's minds. We need consistent terminology so the field knows what is what. She added that the four components of Partnering With Parents are the SPAC, the local PWP chapters, the Parent Mentors Program, and the Parents Speakers Bureau (parents speaking at Foundations Training and other events as needed).

Michelle added that DCFS will support this council, and that money remains to support two statewide staff.

Gregory suggested that the co-chairs get with Ray soon to discuss the path forward related to getting more members.

Noting it was 32 minutes beyond the scheduled stop time, Cassandra asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Cassandra and the second was given by Gregory. The motion passed with no opposition. Meeting adjourned.

JB Pritzker
Governor



Marc D. Smith
Director



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