



**DCFS Statewide Parent Advisory Council (SPAC)
November 22, 2022**

Approved as submitted, 1/24/2023

Present- Parents – Cassandra Williams, Theresa Leggins, Gregory Cox,
Dorothy Jordan, Leolani Posten

Guest Parents – Chris Little and Shawnise Newton, both from the PWP
Springfield Chapter

Non-Parent Members – Janelle Pulcher

Support Staff – Kim Willis, Ray Gates

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

Lack of Quorum – Ray announced that there was not a quorum of members present. Therefore, according to the bylaws, the only motions that could be made are to approve the minutes and to adjourn the meeting.

Minutes – Cassandra asked if all had received and read the draft minutes of the previous meeting. She encouraged members to reach out to Ray if they ever do not receive the minutes before an upcoming meeting. All present indicated they had received the draft minutes. Then Cassandra asked for discussion, changes, or a motion to approve. There was no discussion.

Motion to approve was made by Janelle; the second was given by Dorothy; and the motion passed.

Posting Parents' Names on SPAC Membership List on DCFS Web Site

Ray acknowledged the obligation DCFS has to keep parent's identifying information confidential. Then he asked parent members whether they are OK with having their names posted on the web site. There was discussion. The outcome is parents who are SPAC members should tell Greg and Cassandra whether they approve having their full names posted on the web site. They must do this by two weeks from today, November 22. Those who do not reach out will be called one time by the chairs. The chairs will let Ray know who does not want their last name posted.

Chapter Reports

Cook - Ray reported that Cook met last month and heard a "My Story" presentation from a parent who has been dealing with the child welfare system for 13 years and now has her children back home. Ray said the story was very inspiring. Dorothy agreed. Ms. Leggins said the parent spoke very well.

Ray added that Cook discussed having their monthly meeting virtually on December 8, followed by a Christmas meeting for parents on December 17 at 6201 S. Emerald.

Springfield – Cassandra reported that they met virtually and had a very helpful educational presentation by Jackie Bratland of DCFS, on the Integrated Assessment process and how it affects parents. They will continue having a parent education topic at each meeting, with the next one being on Service Plans. Also at this next meeting in December, parents will engage in fun activities about self love and self care.

Lake County – Norma was not present, so Ray reported that their meeting had to be cancelled due to an emergency that Norma had to deal with.

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E. St. Louis – Kim reported that she had attended the first meeting of the PWP Program combining with the parent support group at Lifeline Family Advocacy center in E. St. Louis. She said that two parents indicated an interest in being considered for membership on SPAC, and one of those parents would also like to become a parent speaker to speak at the new staff Foundations Training. Both moms were due to give birth soon, so Kim said she will give them a bit of time before following up. Kim will attend their December meeting.

Membership – Ray described three approaches taken since the last meeting, designed to fill the empty parent membership slots on SPAC. Ray connected Greg with DCFS RA Pedro Mendoza, and Greg spoke with Pedro’s team about ways to recruit parents to rebuild the DCFS Lake County PWP Chapter and/or build a new parent chapter elsewhere in Northern Region. Greg can report when he joins this meeting a bit later.

Ray explained that he had worked with the DCFS Southern Region Administrative team to arrange for re-starting the E. St. Louis PWP Chapter by joining with the parent support group at their local Family Advocacy Center. Kim Willis reported that she had attended their meeting on November 9. Kim reported that two parents indicated interest in being considered for membership on SPAC. Kim will attend their monthly meetings in person.

Cassandra has recruited two members of the Springfield PWP Chapter to be considered for membership on SPAC. (They are present today, as guests.)

SPAC needs to draw SPAC members from the Lake County and E. St. Louis chapters. This approach should lead to filling the region-specific parent membership openings on SPAC. After the parent slots have been filled, SPAC should turn its attention to securing active child welfare staff to fill

the positions of current staff members who have never attended a SPAC meeting.

Greg said that we need to reach out to parent members again and if no response this time simply move forward to replace them. Cassandra, Greg, Ray & Kim will meet to discuss next steps to fill SPAC parent membership slots with active parent members.

Shared Parenting Committee Report – Cassandra reported that she had recently spoken at the joint meeting of the foster care and adoption councils about this work and about developing a proposal for DCFS to actively promote and support shared parenting in almost every substitute care situation. She noted that foster parents receive shared parenting training, but their caseworkers do not. Ray said it was great that Cassandra had this opportunity to speak about the need to enhance shared parenting, because several members of the Department’s leadership team were present.

Changing the Nomenclature From Chapters Back to Councils – Greg and Cassandra deferred this discussion to the next meeting due to lack of a quorum.

Greg reported on his meeting with Pedro Mendoza and his team, and he stated that a lady who had worked with PWP said she had felt “left out” in that she didn’t know what was going on in the program and with other chapters. Greg said we need to fix this such that all chapters get equal support, and they all know what one another is doing. Greg will reach out to Pedro for another meeting to try and fortify the Lake County Chapter and/or start a new PWP Chapter elsewhere in Northern Region.

Shawnise suggested all the parent chapters get together once or twice each year. Greg said they could meet at the State Fair. Greg said that SPAC should discuss whether there are different procedures per region for supporting PWP chapters. Ray explained how every region gets the same

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opportunities for financial and central office staff support. It is the regional leadership that must assign a staff person to host the chapters and recruit parent members. Greg said we must remain unified.

Re-Posting the PWP Contract That Supports Two Full-Time PWP Staff

Greg said he thinks that DCFS should re-post this soon.

PWP Change Management Proposal – Greg said he saw in that proposal a three-circle strategy that he liked. Ray said that he and Michelle will be meeting with Cynthia Richter-Jackson to discuss how to involve SPAC in planning the rollout of this proposal and working with DCFS to monitor and direct what happens after rollout.

Next Meeting – Ray noted that the next meeting is set for December 27. Greg said he thought it should be cancelled, and Casandra agreed. Ray said he will ask Tiffany to email all members to announce this cancellation.

Adjournment – When there was no other discussion, the chairs called for a motion to adjourn. Made by Ms. Leggins; no discussion; seconded by Dorothy; no objections. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 4:51 pm.