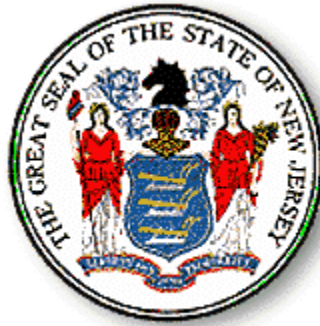


State of New Jersey

Department of Children and Families



Report

of the

New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee

THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

to

Governor Jon Corzine

and

The New Jersey Legislature

Proceedings and Findings

For the period of

July 1, 2008 — June 30, 2009

**New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Staffing Oversight and Review Subcommittee**

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Staffing Oversight and Review Subcommittee

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For the period of
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Co-Chairs, New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect

Honorable Kimberly S. Ricketts
Commissioner
Department of Children and Families

Debra Gise Jennings, Acting Co-Chair
Co-Executive Director
Statewide Parents Advocacy Network

Staffing Oversight and Review Subcommittee Members

Cecilia Zalkind, Chair
Executive Director
Association for Children of New Jersey

Mae Lang, Assistant
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Local 1034

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- 1037

Joseph Vitale, Senator
NJ State Senate
District 19

NJ Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect Staff

Jonathan Sabin,
Executive Director

**ANNUAL REPORT
For the period
JULY 1, 2008 - JUNE 30, 2009**

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**Honorable Kimberly S. Ricketts
Commissioner
Department of Children and Families**

**Mrs. Debra Gise Jennings (Acting)
Executive Co-Director
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc.**

Staffing Oversight and Review Subcommittee

**Chair
Mrs. Cecilia Zalkind
Executive Director
Association for Children of New Jersey**

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New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect Staffing Oversight and Review Subcommittee

ANNUAL REPORT For the period JULY 1, 2008 - JUNE 30, 2009

Introduction

On July 11, 2006, P.L. 2006, Chapter 47 was enabled which established the Department of Children and Families (the “Department”). This law amended numerous statutes in order to transfer a number of functions from the Department of Human Services to this new department, including the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect (“Task Force”). The bill also expanded the responsibilities and membership of the Task Force. Further, the law included provisions whereby the Division of Youth and Family Services Staffing and Outcome Review Panel established under N.J.S.A. 30:4C-3.1 was dissolved and its roles and functions were assumed by the Task Force through the creation of a Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS). The charge of the SORS is to review staffing levels of the Division of Youth and Family Services (the “Division”) order to develop recommendations regarding staffing levels and the most effective methods of recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff within the division. In addition, the subcommittee was mandated to review the Division’s performance in the achievement of management and client outcomes and prepare a report of its findings to the Governor and the Legislature.

Subcommittee Proceedings

The Staffing Oversight and Review Subcommittee met on the following dates: November 19, 2008; January 13, 2009; March 10, 2009; May 12, 2009. These meetings provided the SORS with the opportunity to discuss and assess items associated with their statutorily mandated work. The following meeting minutes provide a record of the activities of the SORS during the past year.

Summary of Activities - 2008 to 2009

The charge of the Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS) is outlined in the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect (NJTFCAN) statute and includes the following:

- Reviewing staffing levels of the Division of Youth and Family Services;
- Developing recommendations regarding staffing levels;
- Developing recommendations around the most effective methods of recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff within the division;
- Reviewing the Division’s performance in the achievement of management and client outcomes; and
- Reporting annually the Subcommittee’s findings to the Governor and the Legislature.

SORS, which is also a subcommittee of the NJTFCAN, attended to this charge by addressing the following items during the course of the past year:

1. The subcommittee continued discussions with DCF related to assessing data and outcomes for New Jersey's child welfare system. Receiving timely and relevant data is the key mechanism for the subcommittee to meet its legislative mandate and considerable time and effort was devoted this year to coming to agreement with DCF on the data needed by the subcommittee.

Review work included:

- a. The Modified Settlement Agreement (MSA) and its data reporting requirements also known as Appendix C: Tracking Successful Implementation of the NJ Case Practice Model and Outcomes of the Modified Settlement Agreement. The subcommittee monitored the identification of outcome measures to be included and requested outcome data as reported by the state to the monitor
 - b. Identification of quantitative & qualitative measures to enable the subcommittee to meet its legislative mandate. The subcommittee devoted significant discussion to the identification and securing of the data necessary for it to oversee staffing and case outcomes.
2. The ongoing training and development of caseworkers, which has been a long-standing issue of importance and concern to the SORS. DCF anticipates that its Case Practice Model, which has taken a prominent role in DYFS operations, will advance case practice and improve the skills of caseworkers in engaging families for better outcomes with children. Members of SORS engaged in discussions with the DYFS Director as well as other DCF Executive Staff members regarding the challenges, strategies and progress of caseworker training and development, especially the implementation of the new Case Practice.
 3. Examining DYFS Caseworker retention continued to be an important issue for SORS this past year. DYFS reports that its attrition rate in November 2008 was approximately 10-11%. By the end of June 2009 the attrition rate was approximately 7%. DYFS reported on their increased efforts to increase the professional and educational level of the child protection staff by hiring people with social work degrees. DCF is using two specific programs to increase the number of professional social workers employed as caseworkers. Interns through the Baccalaureate Child Welfare Education Program (BCWEP) must agree to a two year commitment with DYFS post graduation and workers enrolled in the weekend Rutgers Public Child Welfare Intensive Weekend program (PCWIW) program have the same commitment post graduation.

The DYFS Director requested that SORS help analyze data regarding DYFS staff retention and satisfaction with an eye towards differences in the retention of workers hired with social work degrees and the subset of workers who have gone through the

DYFS intern program or the PCW weekend program. The Director put forward additional questions such as “how many of these employees leave DYFS to work in private agencies” and, if these new caseworkers do leave, “how quickly after completing their two year commitment?” The Division continues to improve educational opportunities for workers which should also help retention efforts. Future DYFS Caseworker training will include DYFS Adolescent workers.

4. Youth aging out of care was another priority issue for SORS this year. A working group of the subcommittee was formed to engage and work with members of the other Citizen Review Panel which has also identified youth aging out of care as a priority issue. This working group delved into reviewing the age, race, gender, placement status and length of care for youth under DYFS supervision. Interest also continued regarding data related to outcomes, including the number of youth graduating from high school and college, the number in transitional living, the number unemployed, in jail or having children, and the number adopted or in Kinship Legal Guardianship arrangements. SORS is looking towards examining services available to, and needed by, youth aging out of care.

The working group concluded that the ability of the subcommittee to discuss in a meaningful way the issue of aging out youth is dependent on further data being made available and a data request was made to DCF. This data should include information about the NJ Foster Scholars program, a program that provides eligible foster and homeless youth full tuition to a public New Jersey college, university, or vocational school. SORS discussed and advocated for ensuring that scholarship recipients are aware that they have supporters and advocates available to assist them with their academic and emotional concerns, as well as assist them with social support in terms of their scholarship funding through the case management system. The SORS also requested a joint meeting with members of the Citizen Review Panel to discuss coordinating its work. This meeting is scheduled for the fall,

5. Resource Homes and the continued recruitment of resource families is an ongoing concern of SORS. DCF reported that licensing numbers and recruitment continue to be robust and that they continue to sign on new families. The subcommittee was pleased with this news but wants additional information such as “can exit surveys be done with foster parents?” The subcommittee spent additional time brainstorming about resource home retention and the possible involvement of educators and external stakeholders to look at retention of foster parents, volunteers, and staff.
6. Other priorities identified for 2008-2009 are still in discussion. These included the following issues:
 - Disproportionality of children in placement or under the supervision of the child welfare system
 - Data and outcomes related to permanency and adoption.
 - Quality assessment review of DYFS practice/case handling scheduled to be implemented by the division.

- The continuum of services for youth transitioning out of Child Behavioral health.
- Implementation of the federal Fostering Connections legislation.

The minutes of the SORS, which are attached, reflect in more detail the discussion of the committee. Considerable discussion over the last year was about the data and information needed by the SORS to meet its legislative mandate. The subcommittee was sensitive to the extensive data that DCF is required to report to the federal monitor under the settlement agreement, and made every effort to coordinate its data requests. However, committee members continue to be frustrated that the data provided to the subcommittee throughout the year was not sufficient to fully address its goals. The fact that the outcome measures that DCF must report to the federal monitor have been finalized and that more information is available on the DCF website may address some of the subcommittee's concerns.

Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

The following are the minutes taken at SORS meetings between July 2008 and June 2009.

November 19, 2008

Report by SORS leadership regarding the NJTFCAN Retreat on September 26, 2008

Ceil Zalkind - The goal of the retreat was to develop a strategic plan for the upcoming year. Commissioner Ricketts spoke about DCF priorities and requested NJTFCAN assistance with several DCF priorities, including:

- Disproportionality in Child Welfare
- Caseworker retention
- Children's health and dental needs including Physicians training in child abuse and neglect.

DCF Update on Data Availability

Commissioner Kimberly Ricketts met with the federal monitor and plaintiff on Monday, November 17th and spoke with Judy Meltzer about the DCF data plan.

- The federal monitor drives the DCF data plan.
- DCF will have a comprehensive data plan approved by the federal monitor within 4 weeks.
- DCF data information will be on the website. There will be one data plan so that everyone will be looking at the same information.
- DCF will not provide different data sets to different groups.

Casey Family Program - Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare

The Casey Family Program (CFP) will meet with Commissioner Ricketts in December and work with DCF to develop a task list and time frame. SORS is invited to collaborate with DCF on this issue.

Angela Estes Acknowledgement

Debra Jennings - request that SORS acknowledge Angela Estes for her service as a past subcommittee Chair. The Subcommittee voted to approve this request. Laurie Cancialosi will obtain a Senate Resolution acknowledging Angela Estes' service.

Update on DCF Case Practice Model & Child Behavioral Health Services

Christine Mozes, Director of DYFS and Nadezhda Robinson, Director of DCBHS provided an update on the case practice model and on child behavioral health initiatives.

Youth Aging-Out of Foster Care

C. Zalkind - ACNJ is interested in the permanency needs of this population. Christine Mozes reported –

- 11-12 DYFS Offices have adolescent units with specially trained staff to identify needs and services for this population. The hope and expectation is that all 47 Local Offices will eventually have adolescent workers/ units.
- DYFS has been reviewing records for all teenagers including the 18-21 yr old population (but not exclusive to them) in order to search out past connections that might now be considered as a placement/ permanent resource. In some instances, youth have contact with parents and relatives when abuse and neglect is no longer a concern.

DCBHS Youth ages 17 – 21 transitioning into the adult DMHS system.

Nadezhda Robinson - DYFS, DMHS, and DCBHS will pilot a transition planning program in four counties: Burlington, Monmouth, Middlesex and Ocean. Four transition planning conferences took place in September and October, 2008.

Aging out youth have various needs and case managers need different tools to serve adolescents transitioning into the adult mental health system. A survey instrument "The Tool" was developed to identify adolescent needs and assist in transition planning. C. Mozes and N. Robinson requested SORS' assistance in contacting shelter providers, group homes, therapeutic homes, and transitional living programs to distribute the survey.

N. Robinson - DCBH case managers are researching records to locate 'natural supports' for youth aging out of the system. Housing has always been difficult. Richard O'Grady is leading an effort to identify semi permanent homes for youth with behavioral needs. Bob Guarasci's NJ Community Development Program and the NJ Scholars Program are good models. The NJ Scholars Program works with Rutgers to provide housing for youth in college. DCF is currently analyzing federal legislation that places housing responsibility on colleges for youth aging out of foster care.

Caseworker Retention – Christine Mozes

DYFS attrition rate is approximately 10-11%. DYFS has increased its efforts to professionalize the child protection staff by hiring people with social work degrees. Social work interns through the BCWEP program must agree to a 2 year commitment with DYFS post graduation and workers enrolled in the weekend Rutgers Public Child Welfare (PCW) program have the same commitment post graduation.

C. Mozes would like SORS to help analyze the data regarding DYFS staff retention and satisfaction. Question: Is there a difference in the retention of workers hired with social work degrees and the subset of workers who have gone through the DYFS intern program or the PCWIW weekend program? How many of these employees leave DYFS to work in private agencies? How quickly after completing their 2 year commitment? The Division continues to improve educational opportunities for workers. It would also help retention efforts to have a more realistic recruitment tool.

Case Practice Model – Christine Mozes

DCF has a 2 pronged approach to roll out of the CPM: statewide training for all staff on two modules and immersion site training where staff will receive all 4 training modules and have intermittent coaching along with the training. The immersion sites received training and coaching in assessment and conducting family team meetings February - October. Goal is once all staff have received the full CPM training and coaching: Every worker will have the knowledge to facilitate a family team meeting. The current statewide training includes Building Trust Based relationships (engagement) and Making Visits Matter.

For children who enter care our ultimate goal is that the family will have an initial meeting within 72 hours and have a first family team meeting within 30 days. This timeframe is in line with our concurrent planning protocols. This provides an opportunity for family members to identify persons (both formal and informal supports) to be included in the family team meeting. Through a training partnership with Rutgers, DYFS is building our internal capacity to develop trainers and coaches. Select individuals will be trained as “master” coaches and “master” trainers to eliminate the need for outside consultants. Currently DYFS has identified the casework supervisors as the first to be trained up as coaches.

C. Mozes is pleased about the culture shift at the immersion sites. Workers are enthused about the new case practice model that permits more time to work with families.

NJTFCAN Draft Strategic Plan

Priority topics: training on protective factors; child on child sexual abuse and the statewide prevention plan; disproportionality in child welfare; children’s health including comprehensive medical exams and access to dental care.

SORS Priorities for 2009

1. Data set review
2. Disproportionality in child welfare
3. Youth aging-out of the foster care system
4. Permanency and adoption
5. Caseworker retention and recruitment
6. QSR on the Case practice model

Ceil Zalkind -

- SORS would like qualitative outcome data regarding the case practice model.
- It would be helpful to know some of the common characteristics of children who do not achieve permanency.
- C. Mozes agreed to provide SORS with a schedule of the qualitative reviews.
- SORS would like to know what the QSR will look like.

January 13, 2009

SORS Vice-Chair

Cecilia Zalkind requested nominations from the subcommittee for the position of Vice Chair. Anyone interested in serving as Vice Chair should contact C. Zalkind or J. Sabin.

Data Collection – C. Zalkind

- All meeting agendas should include an update on DCF Data Collection.
- A meeting was held with Judy Meltzer to discuss what Data SORS would like.
- C. Zalkind met with DCF commissioner regarding Data set to be collected.
- **The subcommittee requested that the minutes reflect that SORS must have DCF raw data in order to meet its responsibilities.**

2009 Annual Report to the Legislature

The report will include updates on:

- Data set collection
- Case Practice Model
- Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

The six priorities identified by SORS previously are subsets of the above.
SORS discussed the following:

- SORS will focus on permanency/adoption issues for 18-21 year old youth.

- New federal legislation requires states to increase permanency/adoption efforts. SORS would like an update within 6 months on the new federal law and how NJ is implementing its requirements.
- What are DCF priorities regarding KLG?
- A continuum of services for youth transitioning from Child Behavioral Health.
- Youth must have input into the development of services.

Data Set

SORS members asked J. Sabin to arrange a presentation by John Ducoff for the next meeting on data collection. Question: what mechanism is in place to resolve differences of opinion if after their review SORS comes to a different conclusion from DCF regarding the information reflected in data?

C. Zalkind – Without raw data to analyze, the relevance of this committee is questionable.

- Need to have the data set agreement finalized.
- SORS must have access to raw data, as it currently exists, to analyze and make an objective review.
- DCF website data is inadequate for SORS purposes.
- A separate meeting will be scheduled on data issues, basic information on case practice; demographics as well as how data is collected and reported.
- Need caseload data by county including demographics, outcomes, numbers, etc.
- DYFS staff recruitment, retention data and caseloads by range.
- Data on DYFS exit surveys.

Members requested J. Sabin to have C. Mozes clarify her request that SORS assist in reviewing the exit interview data.

DYFS Pilot Program – Lisa von Pier

Child Behavioral Health Services in collaboration with DHS Mental Health has implemented a pilot program to assist aging out youth in seamlessly transitioning from the youth mental health system to the adult mental health system in 4 counties: Burlington, Middlesex, Mercer and Bergen.

The information from the pilot counties should be provided to SORS and to the courts. Brian Hancock is compiling statistics from the pilot programs. He is analyzing behavioral health information and independent living services for youth.

Lisa von Pier provided an update on the Case Practice training for DYFS workers:

- DCF/DYFS is working toward building good case practice with all case management and supervisory staff through an intensive training program and coaching approach to develop staff to be able to facilitate Family Team Meetings.
- DYFS Local Office staff have access to a computer program called “Safe Measures” which allows anyone from the Local Office Manager to the caseworker to monitor

how well staff is complying with meeting standards of caseload size, investigation response times, timely completion of investigations, visitation schedules, etc.. The federal monitor does have access to this information.

- Christine Mozes is analyzing LO staffing levels in an effort to equalize these levels across the state.
- Currently there are approximately 9,000 children in placement.

SORS intends to look at the entire picture for youth transitioning out of the system. It was reported that Randi Mandelbaum from Rutgers School of Law has developed a youth survey for the NJ Child Welfare Citizen Review Panel. The Panel is also interested in aging out services and customer satisfaction for this population. Legal Services advocates for youth transitioning out of foster care and has a representative on the Panel.

NJ has made some significant steps in this area, but SORS needs data to determine where we are in the process and to identify the gaps and collaborative agencies. A workgroup will identify issues and questions for the May 12th meeting. **Workgroup volunteers: Mary McManus, Pat Myers, Rita Gulden and Valerie Ayres.**

Performance Evaluation Project

Lisa von Pier reported that DYFS is undertaking a Performance Evaluation Process for 6 families in each of the DYFS immersion offices. Cheryl McDougal is supervising this effort. The review will consist of case file reviews, information from court records and CASA, family interviews and case manager records. Lisa will provide updates on implementation of the new Case Practice Model as well as the PEP (performance evaluation project)..

March 10, 2009

Update from subcommittee on Aging Out Youth

Commissioner Ricketts

- Aging out a priority for DCF
- Kids can stay until 21 and we are looking to have kids receive proper resources
- DCF wants to partner on this issue
- Want to look at data request and what DCF already collecting and what additional might be needed and come back to the SORS. DCF will determine a time frame.

Rita – Data request – Do we want to reach out to DOE or JJC for some of this data?

- DOE does not track kids in care – NJ Smart not good for this
- With development of adolescent units, DCF already looking at some of these items
- A presentation/information was requested to show the permanency connection of DCF and DHS showing how youth are transitioned into the adult system
- How is the planning congruent for aging out with hopes of reunification

- DCBHS surveyed the counties in the pilot program and the gathered information would be presented once it has been prepared
 - It has been suggested that the aging out data be generated from more than one source, ensuring more than one focus area
 - All data is requested to be submitted prior to meeting to allow time for review.
 - Data received would be helpful in meeting the priorities of SORS, the Task Force, and the Commissioner alike
 - An invitation is to be extended to the Citizen Review Panel for their insight of the aging out issue for the May meeting
 - Is it worth reaching out to the Rutgers Transition for Youth project leader to provide info about other view points that are involved (not sure who was to reach out to this facility)
-
- The link to demographics from DCF website was received as well as the agency annual performance report
 - Original information received from DYFS did not include individual caseload
 - Information reported up to December 31, 2008 informs on caseload average per office
 - Phase II of the Modified Settlement Agreement, as of January, 2009, report must include individual worker caseloads
 - Commissioner has requested that as information is submitted to the monitor it is to be submitted to SORS
 - The data plan presented to monitor is still being negotiating based on a few elements
 - The caseload portion of the MSA is an issue that is non-negotiable
 - As of January, 2009, the department must report the supervisor ratio to worker and the caseload by individual worker
 - Frequency of reporting is still in negotiation
 - The emergent site audit is expected to provide baseline data. Once caseload reports and outcome reports are finalized and submitted to monitor, reports to be shared with SORS
 - Judy Meltzer will speak w/stakeholders to negotiate w/all parties involved regarding data

NJ Scholars

- NJ Scholars program numbers were down from previous year reflecting over a 30% decrease
 - possibly down because of contracted funding or lack of proactive work involved in promoting the program or some case management issues
 - 400 children registered in program, 350 are active, 50 are not doing anything
 - If interested, data from the NJ Scholars program can be submitted
 - The scholarship recipient needs to know an advocate is available to assist them with their academic and emotional concerns, as well as assist them with social support in terms of their scholarship funding through the case management system
 - Project MYSELF might be a helpful tool to review

Needed Data

- Christine would like SORS to look at staff retention in the department
 - Don't need help with managing caseload
 - Consider the caliber and quality of those brought in with BSWs and MSWs who are staying in the system
 - The success the workers are playing in these roles is missing. Recording this data can be a long-term process, but it needs to be done
 - Examine the workers taking advantage of weekend programs to obtain MSW
 - Mostly interested in the retention of those who the department has invested in
 - Staff should stay to payback
- Exit surveys may be a good place to begin
 - Retention down to about 7%, lowest ever – possibly due to economy
 - Christine to check with HR to determine how frequently exit surveys are done
 - A copy of instrument used for the exit survey is to be provided and the list of educational opportunities, available throughout department, to see if it mirrors opportunities and questions on exit survey.
- Determine why workers are leaving
 - Better job
 - Are opportunities not offered for the type of work
 - What remedies can be done to retain staff
 - Would like recommendations on how this can be done
- Adolescent workers – not fully functional in all DYFS local offices yet, 5 staff/office, sample size small, aging out work, training, ensure tool needed to effectively do work, what they feel they need they're not getting, could be why they leave or not wanting to do work, separate than issue of retention
- BCWEP Program
 - 200 graduates are currently working in DYFS, 7 colleges in NJ offer BSW and internships
 - Currently 50 enrolled in program and are interning in local offices
 - The # of interns in program was reduced because of vacancies, increased pay back requirements to two years
 - Penalty for leaving earlier is to payback funds
 - Are participants staying beyond 2 year commitment?
 - Are they committed to child welfare?
- PCWIW
 - The Public Child Welfare Intensive Weekend Program over 100 started, 30 – 40 students hoping to start in 9/09
- Committee members expressed their frustration in receiving the data necessary to conduct the work of the SORS

Resource Homes

- Licensing numbers and recruitment continue to be robust in signing on new people
- What are the additional incentives to attract foster parents?

- Once resource home become adoptive homes, which is the biggest portion of the resource homes, they're out
 - Can exit surveys be done w/foster parents?
- Retention Theme
 - Should incorporate some educators, external stakeholders to look at retention of foster parents, volunteers, staff, etc.
 - Closed for unknown reasons – how can we use data that point in right direction
- As a new member, Amy not clear of the role of the SORS and suggested it be defined
 - Jonathan is to forward SORS statutory language, Task Force's Mission Statement, Strategic Plan information, past reports
 - what's mandated and what are assignments given by task force
 - what does Division thinks should be done
- Christine to solidify what she would like SORS to look at
 - narrow down to a number of specific items
 - drill down into staffing issue – resources from dept to furthering education of staff, whether it's productive, or need to be tweaked,
- Any other topics please forward
- Rita to discuss with Ceil to determine if group needs to look at charge, settlement agreement, legislation, Task Force's Strategic Plan and the areas of focus noted by the Commissioner
 - After documents have been reviewed a conference call will be scheduled for those who would like to participate
- Aging out issue – will wait to see data commissioner sends
- Call together other committee members for discussion
 - If you want to join send email to Rita
 - someone from DYFS to also attend
 - would like to ask for consensus from group,
 - put on table what should be looked at in interest of bring dept's concerns to table of what they'd like SORS to do
- CFSR statewide assessment
 - The assessment was completed and submitted
 - Feds are scheduling training meeting with staff of Gloucester, Somerset, and Essex
 - To begin March 30, 2009 through the first couple of days of April
 - Cheryl MacDougal is lead at stakeholders meetings
 - Christine is confident that the interview process with Feds is set up
 - Interviews consist of reviewers meeting with families and others involved in a case, DYFS staff is responsible for reaching out to individuals to get them to the interview and meet other caseworkers
- Agenda for next meeting
 - In depth focus on aging out youth
 - Agreement on data request and data request in advance to committee

- Cross cutting systems, coordinating services across systems, DYFS and/or DCBHS to adult system, presentation from Valerie
 - Expand data to look at info from DCBHS on kids not going home to parents, including info about pilots w/DCBHS connecting kids to mental health services in adult services, permanency in DCBHS and DYFS
- Invite CRP to present information they have regarding aging out youth
- Provide past information from NJ Scholars for discussion
- Does AOC have any data on state cases that stay opened?
 - Child placement review developing protocol for aging out youth under review by the CPR – spotty b/c of age 18-21 pop assigned to CASA volunteers
- Joann Dietrich to possibly present AOC part in reporting on the status of CPR protocol
- Possibly develop a subcommittee to plan agenda
- Advocacy for kids informing them of their entitlement to services past 18
 - Info re: access to & what happens to kids in scholarship program
 - Where is help coming from? Law Guarding, CASA, Court system, DYFS
 - What are the different responsibilities
- An update on adolescence unit training adolescence workers
 - What's special about these units; not quite knowledgeable about the process with the 18 – 21 year olds yet
 - which states and offices they are operating in

Minutes

- Motioned, second, one abstention and approved

May 12, 2009

Approval of Minutes

- March 10, 2009 minutes reviewed - Chair stated that amendments were needed to better reflect subcommittee concerns regarding 'data'. No vote was taken.
- Minutes will be amended to show that D. Jennings participated by teleconference.
- C. Zalkind will make revisions and provide to Jonathan Sabin for distribution.

DATA Power Point Presentation – John Ducoff

See attached Power Point.

Summary

- DYFS demographics provide an overall picture of children and families.
- Graphs 2004-2008 indicate over time the number of families under supervision and children in out of home placement declined.
- Graphs assist the process of identifying where to pull data from NJ SPIRIT.
- DCF expects that it will take approximately 3 years for optimal use of NJ SPIRIT; however, DCF is in a much better position regarding data than in the past.

- Graph indicates percentage of children in out of home placement by age as of December 31, 2008.
- DCF working with federal monitor and Chapin Hall to generate additional types of data.
- Chapin Hall compiles data by 'entry cohort' and 'exit cohort'. DCF prefers 'entry cohorts' as more reflective of 'good practice'. 'Exit cohort' is a disincentive to move kids to permanency.
- Individual DYFS office data including number of kids in placement is available to SORS.
- Data also available by county.

Appendix C: Tracking successful Implementation of the NJ Case Practice Model and Outcomes of the Modified Settlement Agreement

- Document on Quantitative & Qualitative Measures distributed to SORS.

SORS concerns:

- Need technical assistance to navigate DCF website and interpret Chapin Hall data.
- Need the ability to compare data sets.
- Need outcome data from the federal settlement agreement.
- Want DCF staff to compile data for the 2009 report.
- SORS wants to analyze the raw data and make its own determination.

Commissioner Ricketts:

- DCF staff (J. Ducoff & Jessica Pena) will provide technical assistance to access website and interpret data.
- When new data is posted an e-mail is sent out by DCF to NJTFCAN and SORS.
- 2006 data posted on the website is available for comparison.
- DCF is collecting and posting a greater amount of data than in the past.
- DCF will continue to work with SORS to provide requested data.
- Some of the data requested is duplicative of what the federal monitor is analyzing.
- DCF has contracted with Chapin Hall to sort out data collected from NJ SPIRIT for the federal monitor and it is published on the DCF website.
- DCF would like SORS' assistance to analyze aging-out and disproportionality issues.
- A DYFS person will be assigned to work with SORS.
- The data indicates that reform initiatives are working.
- J. Sabin will arrange a power point presentation for the NJTFCAN.

Next Steps

- June - J. Sabin will convene a meeting between SORS subgroup, Jessica Pena & Christine Mozes to determine a process for identifying the data SORS needs and the capacity of DCF to provide it.
- SORS subgroup will plan the July agenda for meeting with the NJ Child Welfare Citizen Review Panel and Rutgers School of Law to discuss the Aging Out satisfaction survey on services to youth aging out of the system.

July Agenda

- Meet with representatives of the NJ Child Welfare Citizen Review Panel and Rutgers School of Law to discuss the aging out survey; educational issues; and other service gaps and how to coordinate efforts to prevent overlap.
- DCF Priorities
- DYFS staffing issues
- DYFS Retention/attrition rate
- Educational goals for DYFS staff – 2 yr degree efforts.

September, 2009

- DCF Presentation on the MSW program
- Caseload data
- Staff Retention
- Challenge to reconcile DCF data with the AOC

Summary

The work of the SORS is directed by the charge found in the NJTFCAN statute which includes the following:

- Reviewing staffing levels of the Division of Youth and Family Services;
- Developing recommendations regarding staffing levels;
- Developing recommendations around the most effective methods of recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff within the division;
- Reviewing the Division's performance in the achievement of management and client outcomes; and
- Reporting annually the Subcommittee's findings to the Governor and the Legislature.

The subcommittee attended to this charge by addressing the following items during the course of the past year:

4. The subcommittee continued discussions with DCF related to establishing outcomes and obtaining data. Additional work included:
 - c. The Modified Settlement Agreement (MSA) and its data reporting requirements also known as Appendix C: Tracking successful Implementation of the NJ Case Practice Model and Outcomes of the Modified Settlement Agreement
 - d. Look at quantitative & qualitative measures
5. The DCF Case Practice Model has taken a prominent role in DYFS operations. It is hoped that this new model will advance case practice and improve the skills of caseworkers in engaging families for better outcomes with children. The ongoing training and development of caseworkers in the Case Practice Model as well as with regard to other professional development has been a concern. The Subcommittee

engaged in discussions with the DYFS Director as well as other DCF Executive Staff members regarding the progress caseworker training and development.

6. Examining DYFS Caseworker Retention was an important issue for the SORS this past year. The DYFS attrition rate in November 2008 was approximately 10-11%. By the end of June 2009 the attrition rate was approximately 7%. DYFS reported on their increased efforts to professionalize the child protection staff by hiring people with social work degrees. Two specific programs are being utilized to increase the amount of professional social workers employed as caseworkers. Interns through the Baccalaureate Child Welfare Education Program (BCWEP) must agree to a 2 year commitment with DYFS post graduation and workers enrolled in the weekend Rutgers Public Child Welfare (PCW) program have the same commitment post graduation. The DYFS Director requested that the SORS to help analyze the data regarding DYFS staff retention and satisfaction with an eye towards differences in the retention of workers hired with social work degrees and the subset of workers who have gone through the DYFS intern program or the PCWIW weekend program. She posited additional questions such as “how many of these employees leave DYFS to work in private agencies” and, if these new caseworkers do leave, “how quickly after completing their 2 year commitment?” The Division continues to improve educational opportunities for workers which should also help retention efforts. Future DYFS Caseworker training will include DYFS Adolescent workers.
7. Youth aging out of care was a priority issue for the subcommittee this year. The SORS questioned DCF staff regarding the age, race, gender, placement status and length of care for youth under DYFS supervision. Continued interest exists regarding data related to outcomes, including the number graduating from high school and college, the number in transitional living, the number unemployed, in jail or having babies, and the number adopted or in Kinship legal guardianship arrangements. The SORS is looking towards examining services available to, and needed by, this group.
 - a. The NJ Scholars program is an important program that works with Rutgers to provide housing for aging out youth in college. NJ Scholars program numbers were down from previous year reflecting over a 30% decrease which possibly occurred because of contracted funding or lack of proactive work involved in promoting the program. Some case management issues may also have been involved. 400 young people were reported registered in program, 350 are active, and 50 are not active. In SORS discussions it was agreed that the scholarship recipient needs to know an advocate is available to assist them with their academic and emotional concerns, as well as assist them with social support in terms of their scholarship funding through the case management system
- Resource Homes and the continued recruitment of resource families is an ongoing concern of the SORS. DCF reported that licensing numbers and recruitment continue to be robust and that they continue to sign on new people. The subcommittee was pleased with this news but wants additional information such “can exit surveys be

done w/foster parents?” The subcommittee spent additional time brainstorming about resource home retention and the possible involvement of educators and external stakeholders to look at retention of foster parents, volunteers, staff, etc.