

**New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS)
Vacant, Chair
Rita Gulden, MSW, Vice-Chair
Tuesday, March 11, 2014 - 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
20 West State Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room 219
Trenton, NJ 08550**

In Attendance

Rita Gulden	CASA of New Jersey
Elizabeth Bowman	DCF, Office of Performance Management and Accountability
Marygrace Billek	Mercer County DHS
Lisa von Pier	DCF, Child Protection and Permanency
Amy Fischer	Administrative Office of the Courts
Patricia Myers	Legal Services of New Jersey
Linda Porcaro	Somerset Co. Office of Youth Services

Staff

Dawn M. Leff	DCF-NJTFCAN SORS
--------------	------------------

Introduction and Review of Minutes:

Introductions were made and the January 2014 minutes were reviewed and approved.

New Business:

Rita reported the voluntary resignation of Ceil Zalkind as the Chair of the SORS subcommittee. It was reported that the Task Force will be voting on a new chair at their next scheduled meeting.

Next agenda item discussed centered on the SORS Annual Report. Rita reviewed the previous process which included a review of the previous year meeting minutes, review of previous annual report and a correlation of the tasks and accomplishments. Dawn Leff reported that the DCF communications department will, as previously, print the report on behalf of SORS, the other subcommittees and the Task Force as well. Due to the nature of the report timeframes, Rita requested that the SORS members review information mentioned and submit draft notes and ideas to her as well as Dawn by the first or second week in April so that she may complete a draft to the members for remarks in a week. This will allow enough time to submit to the DCF communications to complete.

The CP&P retention data was reviewed and discussed. Included for review and discussion was the CP&P staff separation rate chart which chronicled front line caseload carrying staff separation from 2004 through 2012. Beth Bowman as well as Lisa vonPier discussed how CP&P staff separation is currently well below the National average. Dialogue took place around contributing factors of staff separation. Lisa vonPier reported that exit interviews are happening and that most identified factors are personal reasons such as moving out of state and that most separated staff leave in good standing. Lisa further reported that she has asked DCF Human Resources to see

the exit interviews to perceive any trends and or patterns regarding drop off rate of separation, Local Office as well as Area drop off rates, etc... Lisa vonPier discussed that the exit interview is designed as a DCF exit interview which is not specific to caseload carrying staff and it is also voluntary for staff to complete. Lisa will be researching further and will provide the subcommittee feedback.

The DCF Training Academy course curriculum was distributed for the subcommittee members to review. Committee members commented on the comprehensive nature of the available courses. Lisa vonPier discussed that all trainee staff are required to complete the identified new worker training curriculum and all caseload carrying and supervisory staff are required to complete 40 hours of training annually. This is a combination of mandatory topics identified as focus areas of DCF, focus needs of the local office or individual caseloads as well as personal interest of the staff. Lisa also discussed the challenges local office managers have at balancing training requirements with holidays, vacations, sick leave and weather related closures with the priority needs of the office. Training requirements are tracked quarterly to ensure that staff meets the annual requirements with a corrective plan if some staff fall short. Staff must repeat a mandatory training class if they fail or there are reported issues such as lateness, attendance or behavior. It was confirmed that supervisors are notified if a staff member fails a training course or there were identified issues.

There was further dialogue pertaining to the analysis of the staff training pre and posttest process and how that process informs further assessment of training opportunities. This discussion concluded with a request to gather this informational update from Robert Ring. It was decided that there was not a need for Robert to attend a SORS meeting but that this information could be requested. It was also suggested that this information be included in the annual report. CASA members discussed the positive feedback received from members participating in training classes that are offered when classes are not at their capacity. This allows for further partnership between CP&P and CASA.

Linda Porcaro presented an update from the Staff Survey Subgroup. The subgroup decided that focus groups would be utilized as a mechanism to gain the most significant targeted factors. There was lively discussion as to consistency of multiple focus groups, need for a cross section of staff, potential of utilizing training classes at the training academy and the concerns about independent feedback as well as the logistics of staffing the focus groups. Lori Morris was identified as a member with knowledge, expertise and experience with focus groups. Rita emphasized that the subgroup will need to decide on the logistics of the focus groups. Dawn Leff reiterated from the previous meeting that DCF will be assisting by making an application to the NRC for technical assistance on behalf of SORS. It was decided Linda Porcaro will notify Dawn of upcoming available dates to schedule planning meeting with the NRC to assist in developing focus group and survey questions.

Old Business:

Topic of parent/child visitation was revisited. There was animated conversation around tracking visits between parents and children whose goal is not reunification. Lisa vonPier reinforced CP&P policy and practice of parents and children must continue to visit but current tracking practices focus on those visits between parents and children whose goal is reunification. Data is not readily

available for those whose goal is not. Concurrent planning was clarified and after much discussion the group decided that they would like to see data regarding parent/child visitation on the cohort of children whose goal has been changed and accepted by the courts from reunification to adoption but Termination of Parental Rights/Guardianship has not yet been granted. Lisa vonPier reported that she will review policy as well as discuss with Adoption Operations and research to gather data on this cohort of children. Rita reiterated that clarification regarding question #3 from the questions/answers submitted from DCF was to come from FAFS and will wait until the new FAFS appointment to the Task Force and SORS is made.

The old business topic about training was resolved earlier in the meeting and was not revisited.

Rita discussed an upcoming event sponsored by CASA which will be free. The May event will be an opportunity to meet the author, Chris Beam of "To the End of June". It is an in-depth look at the American Foster care system. Once more information is received, Rita will forward to Dawn who will distribute it to the group members.

Next Meeting/Announcement –

May 13, 2014 at 10am – same location in room 219- Roebbling Building, Trenton, NJ