

CWAC RACIAL EQUITY MEETING MINUTES

Department of Children & Family Services
CWAC Racial Equity

Date of Meeting:	01/25/2023	Time:	10am – 11:30am
Meeting Facilitator:	Dagené Brown	Location:	WebEx

1. Attendees				
Name(s)				
Dagené Brown (Co-chair)	Christopher Towers	Jere Murry	Mari Christopherson	Gussie Reed, Guest
Jasmine Mobley (Co-chair)	Damaris Acevedo	Jose Lopez	Paula Truitt-Alohan	
Ashley Deckert	Heather Dorsey	LaTasha Roberson-Guifarro	Prestina Singleton	
Dr. Charles Montorio-Archer	James Bracey	Lourdes Rodriguez	Wendy Ingersoll	
Chandler Mattison-Farris	Jeffrey Walker	Lyman Legters	Nina Watts, Guest	

2. Meeting Objective/Agenda
CWAC RE Meeting

3. Attachments & Handouts	
Description	Prepared by
 RE Agenda 01252023.docx	Dagené Brown
SharePoint Link to meeting: CWAC Racial Equity Committee Meeting-20230125 1544-1	Dagené Brown

4. Meeting Summary & Minutes
1. Welcome a. Roll call was completed via the WebEx chat box and participant list. Dagené stated moving forward the meeting participant list will be utilized to capture attendance. b. Approval of minutes for September 2022 was achieved after reaching quorum. The motion to approve the identified minutes was made by Dagené. Motion moved by Charles; motion seconded by Prestina; one abstention from Damaris for not being present at the last meeting. Motion carries. 2. Co-Chair Updates a. CCWIS – Children360: Dagené opened this portion of meeting to share hopes of receiving a demo for Children360 dashboard via CCWIS/Illinois Connect, the new system replacing SACWIS. Dagené informed the Children360 is a product of conversations between herself and Deloitte on resource deficits beneficial to RE. As a result of those conversations between Dagené and Deloitte, Children360 was a top priority release from the CCWIS buildout. Dagené

shared Children360 product will share resources from Department and Deloitte across the state to identify deficits by way of mapping. Dagené provided a resource shortage example by using Cairo, Illinois. Children360 will help cases in system entry where disproportionality is a factor. Children 360 scheduled to be completed in March 2023 and first round of training to follow. Dagené shared her appreciation for cross collaboration in the buildout of Children360. Jasmine added appreciation of being able to view things from a systemic perspective and filling in the gaps. Dagené opened the floor for questions regarding Children360. Lyman posed a question on how information is captured and the disaggregation of information by race and ethnicity to the populations of concernment. Dagené responded to share that Children360 captures data from the state population and not child welfare and shared Children 360 outlines resources by poverty and can disaggregate information by race and other factors. Jasmine added shared excitement of the capability to breakdown resources by population and percentages. Dagené expressed the Children360 tool is an excellent descriptive tool that charts to show areas where resources or lack thereof could affect system entry and disproportionality.

- b. RE Timeline: Dagené expressed the Office of Racial Equity is in a building phase. Dagené shared the RE plan cannot be shared at this time, but she is making steps to be able to allow CWAC RE to receive the Race Equity plan. Dagené shifted topics to discuss the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign [UIUC] study on disproportionality in the use of subsidized guardianship. Dagené shared a high level, detailed review of UIUC's subsidized guardianship study that informed the group with details that UIUC interviewed a wide array participants including parents, families and individuals going through this process, judges, attorneys, etc. and ultimately shared ten key findings for permanency professionals. Dagené covered key findings from the study to include, but not limited to, outcomes that more professionals shared the importance of individual evaluation versus using general criteria for adoption. In addition, the findings disclosed most professionals did not see any difference between adoption and guardianship as well as the belief adoption more stable than guardianship. Dagené also shared with the group the study gave recommendations that she will share once the full report is available.
- c. CBP – Priorities: This update included priorities of the greater CWAC. This update was provided by Jasmine. Jasmine stated there are eight priorities of the greater CWAC for 2023. These priorities include (1) CCWIS sharing data, (2) reduction of administrative duplicate requirements such as Deloitte interacting with DCFS, (3) salary parody, (4) inflation parodies related to COLA [cost of living adjustment], (5) a revised CWAC structure, (6) priority to implement a bias-free removal pilot project, (7) SAFE model implementation, and (8) DEI & Permanency. Dagené added by sharing the bias-free removal pilot project has begun in Illinois.
- d. Family First Summit: Dagené began this update giving appreciation to Lyman and identified some CWAC RE members who attended the summit such as Jere, LaTasha, and others. Lyman shared highlights and successes of the Family First Summit. Lyman shared the idea of the summit was using families first as a catalyst toward transformation, the concernment of racial justice concern, and thinking about what transformation is. Lyman added that transformation cannot be centered in DCFS but must include the broader child welfare community. EVP Dr. Sanders was the keynote speaker who looked at data comparing black children to all other children as well as made the thought-provoking comment of how it appears two systems in the Illinois which was meant to spark thinking. Lyman shared the summit included a lived expertise panel as well as a shared consensus of consistent elevation of racial justice and alignment across the board that including ISBE, DHS, and others. Lyman disclosed that a mini replication of the event will take place next month with Illinois Legislature. Breakouts were held at the end of the day, and they are still receiving data and feedback from those breakouts. Takeaways were to keep work moving in 2023 and alignment across sister agencies. Dagené added excitement of the summit and provided feedback on the thought-provoking comment of there being two systems in Illinois. Lyman interjected to add that the Family First Summit was designed to the first of a series and not a one-and-done. Charles posed the question to Lyman regarding the comment of the reality of two systems in Illinois and inquisitive if there was a formal acknowledgment. Lyman responded to Charles' question by disclosing that there was not a formal acknowledgment but more so a mic-drop-moment that was more so endorsing the work of the group and clearly was not an indictment on DCFS. Dagené added after thanking Charles for his question that she was asked by the DCFS Director to share her thoughts of summit to which she responded how she sees the issues every day and was more concerned on how we address them. Dagené provided the group with takeaways on this update to keep the momentum going as well as keep advising the State of Illinois on racial disproportionality collectively.

3. Workgroup Updates

- a. Education Campaign: Dagené opened the floor to Jere and Christopher for this update. Christopher provided an update and shared with the group a recap of the campaign being an ongoing project that started well. Christopher, giving affirmation to Lyman, shared the theme of the campaign is to focus on if this child were mine. The campaign will center around how would you render services and advocate for a child if this child was your own. The workgroup is working with DCFS Communications and an outside resource. There was a change within DCFS which included a new commitment to work with the outside resource. Christopher shared the project will be larger than initially expected and will accommodate five smaller clips versus one large clip. The last meeting was Jan 10th and will have more updates next CWAC RE meeting. Christopher extended an invitation to all to join the campaign workgroup. Dagené thanked Christopher for the update and echoed Christopher's notion to extend the campaign workgroup as well as all workgroup meetings to all interested individuals. Dagené supplemented to this update by reaffirming Christopher's report-out of five smaller clips. Dagené informed the group of changes and transitional challenges within DCFS Communications and

hopes of finalization within next thirty days. Jere concluded this update with cheerful enthusiasm to have the original workgroup members return, and Jere will reach out.

4. Race Equity Toolkit/Equity Assessment: Dagené began this update by reminding the group of that both the Toolkit workgroup and the Assessment workgroup were combined to a single workgroup. Dagené shared the RE Toolkit/Equity Assessment draft via PowerPoint presentation. Dagené covered a detailed overview starting with the introduction and ending available references and resources. Dagené then opened the floor up to questions and concerns. Mari presented a question regarding the timeline of the completed toolkit. Dagené responded to Mari's question and shared with the group that that new tentative deadline is June 2023. Mari presented a follow-up comment/question regarding the toolkit/assessment becoming policy as well as speculating if the toolkit would be included in the contracts for separate entities to take part in equity training to ensure everyone is on the same page statewide. Dagené thanked Mari and held the toolkit/assessment is designed to be shared and reminded the group that some providers are already doing work in space and doing so very well. Dagené will follow up with Mari regarding the toolkit/assessment to be policy and in contracts. LaTasha responded to Mari's questions and comments to conclude that some agencies already have a race equity plan but would not support the enforcement of a toolkit/assessment but would accept how do make part of practice. Like idea of all having same standard but not a requirement.

5. Legislative Updates

- a. Advisory Commission of Reducing Disproportionate Representation of African American Children in Foster Care Act (HB3267): Dagené shared an update. Dagené informed the group this taskforce meets monthly and looks at data to show where disproportionality lies. A goal of the taskforce is attempting to identify resources that would potentially prevent families from entering care and moving closer to permanency. There are three workgroups within the committee/taskforce. Timothy Snowden shared with the taskforce they have until year's end to submit recommendations to the General Assembly. Dagené stated that recommendations can be duplicate at times; however, the goal is to avoid redundancy. Dagené handed the floor to LaTasha who also is a part of the commission for an additional update. LaTasha expressed how the both the taskforce and the commission are comparable. The commission is centered around external resources that looks at how to prevent kids from entering care and what resources we can provide to sustain. The commission is looking at community at large and not just DCFS at elements such as extended family supports, intact services, 211, etc., and is tackling elements from all decision points. The commission looks at reporting and trends and surmises that this problem is not just a DCFS problem. Dagené added more to this update communicating the commission looks at disproportionality from all lenses especially legislative pieces such as children born drug-exposed and the legislation behind it. Ashley shared an internal recap of Rep LaShawn Ford's bill. Ashley, who has been in communications with DCFS, explained that the prime piece is figuring out how to weave in safe care. The bill gives the department the ability to screen in those cases where children are born substance-exposed and the ability to decide on how to move forward. Additionally, and ending her informational, Ashley shared supporting specifics of DCFS policy around children born substance exposed. Lourdes posed a question to Ashley regarding if the case would be opened in DCFS' system for services such as intact. Ashley answers and in summary shared that she believes this does not exclude the ability for intact to be open but rather attempts to prevent the Department, when a child is truly unsafe, the ability to offer services. Dagené added to Lourdes' question and Ashley's points that it does not mean a case cannot open rather means the system would not automatically screen the case in to remove the child. Christopher supplemented to resonate that this only removes the requirement to remove a child born substance exposed and follows with an example using the State's attorney that the State's attorney can no longer open a case just because and allows the Department to look at cases on an individual basis.

James joins the discussion to inquire if disproportionality is being reviewed in Juvenile Justice. Dagené responds by sharing she has attempted to parallel with members of the Juvenile Justice on this matter to understand the nuances and recommendations from the Juvenile Justice vantage point. Dagené questions James on what the understanding of the acronym PEW. James shares the exact understanding is unsure. However, it is a committee comprised of judges, State's attorneys, DCFS personnel, Juvenile Justice probation, and the like whom sit at the table and decide when juveniles accumulate so many points, is it best for that individual to come to custody or remain at home with their parents. James added that children of color are coming in at a disproportionate rate which prevents them from finding placement for the children because of their juvenile justice offenses. James supplements by sharing that most placements are declined and renders to it being hard to find placement because of their criminal backgrounds. This ultimately puts them at higher rate of children remaining in care when the children, in his opinion, should not even be in care in the first place. James asks what DCFS can do to combat this because it makes it appear as if they are keeping kids in care longer. LaTasha thanked James for his eye-opening commentary and requests to have someone from her agency be included and shared with the group her new understanding of this matter. LaTasha requests more information on the topic from Dagené. Dagené to follow up, when possible, to provide additional information. James followed the information request to add this is not new and began in 2008 and is still an ongoing problem/issue. Dagené and LaTasha thanked James for bringing the matter to the group's attention. Chandler then mentions the AOIC, and children's family division is working on a set of dual strategy initiatives and asks to be looped into any follow up as they are looking to create pilots. Dagené acknowledges Chandler's request.

The topic shifted to chat comments regarding hotline calls regarding drug-exposed children specifically marijuana. Ashley shares the hotline is unlikely to screen in drug-exposed children to substances specifically marijuana and is so it is

highly unlikely a child would be removed which supported Dagené's initial point of children not being removed for marijuana exposure. Prestina shares knowledge of instances where a hotline call was made for marijuana use and not a child testing positive for marijuana which led to an investigation and has witnessed this used in cases involving dually involved which is an issue. Prestina asks has this policy been updated since the legalization of marijuana. Ashley responds to Prestina sharing marijuana is not considered a controlled substance in the Illinois Controlled Substances Act and should not trigger an investigation from her experience. Dagené suggests further discussion on the policing within investigations for marijuana use is needed.

- b. Racial Disproportionality Task Force (HB3821): This direct update was omitted for lack of time.
 - c. Equity Racial Disparities Report (HB2914) [Racial Disparities Report HB2914](#): Dagené informs the group of this legislation being sponsored by Rep Mary Flowers. It is a compliment to the advisory commission. This legislation requires a yearly report. Dagené explains the data includes population data which is lengthy but essential. Dagené highlighted appendix B within the report which covers a 5-year span which shows trends.
 - d. Bias-Free Removal Pilot (SB3720): Dagené shared this steering committee has conducted two meetings thus far. The committee began January 10th and met yesterday for the second time. They are in the infancy stages but was able to layout a timeline on the completion of pilot. Dagené will share more information next CWAC RE meeting. The pilot is scheduled to be ready to implement January 2024. Dagené gave a brief member composition of the steering committee which included select CWAC RE members. Dagené directed to Ashley to inform that she reached out Lyman and had opportunity to speak to NY who shared they are also in the infancy stages. Dagené is looking forward to speaking with Nassau County and others who are also implementing the pilot.
- 6. Public Comments
 - a. There are no public comments to share.
 - 7. Adjournment
 - a. Adjournment and gratitude were provided by Dagené.

5. Action Items

Item	Owner	Deadline	Follow Up
UIUC Study	Dagené Brown	Next availability	NA
PEW	Dagené Brown	TBA	Yes

6. Next Meeting (if applicable)

Date:	03/29/2023	Time:	10am	Location:	WebEx
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