

CWAC November 21, 2014

Members present: Rita Katzman, Judy Gundy, Deborah Eves, Tania White, Lelia Hopper, Lori Battin, Phyl Parrish, Carol Wilson, Melissa O'Neill, Phyllis Savides, Pat Lewis, Allison Lowery, Alex Kamberis, Carl Ayers, Denise Dickerson, Emily Womble, Lytricia Toler, Laura Polk, Jennifer Cooper, Denise Gallop, Alex Kamberis, Em Parente, Jane Lissenden, Janice Allen, Comfort Anderson-Miller, Craig Patterson, Kiva Rogers, Jill Forbes, Patience O'Brien, Laura Polk, Tamara Brown, Dorothy Hollahan, Kathy McElroy, Cynthia Bauer, Christie Marra.

The meeting was called to order by Carl Ayers and the group provided self introduction.

Best Practice Courts

This presentation was a panel discussion led by staff of the Court Improvement Program (CIP) from the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia. Panel members are: Lelia Hopper, Director CIP; Jane Lissenden, Training Coordinator CIP; Lori Battin, Senior Research Analyst CIP; Denise Gallow, Deputy Director Hampton DSS; and Janice Allen, Director Louisa DHS. Ms. Lissenden provided the background for the Best Practice Court (BPC) in Virginia. The program is modeled after the *Resource Guidelines – Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases* which is published by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. CIP is focused on improving the court system's handling of child abuse and neglect and foster care cases and BPC is a major part of that process. The BPC program began in 2002 and was made up of 12 courts. Today BPC cover 24 of the 32 judicial districts and 60% of Virginia's foster care population. In 2013, "mentor status" was granted to teams that entered the program before 2008. There are currently 40 local teams; 21 of which are mentor courts. Mentor courts no longer receive CIP funding but they do receive technical assistance. Active BPC may apply for mini-grants to support local activities.

Typically a BPC team is made up of the judge, the clerk, the DSS director, GAL, DSS council, CASA, and other community partners if CASA is not available. All active teams are invited to statewide conferences hosted by CIP. The conferences include two days of training and education. Topics typically include current issues of local, state, and national interest and presenters include nationally recognized experts. New BPC teams and teams with new leadership are also invited to participate in a new team conference. This conference provides back ground on the program, leadership training, and time for teams to meet to begin setting goals and planning activities. Each new team is paired with a mentor judge from an active team to guide the discussion. The next new BPC conference is scheduled for fall 2015.

Denise Gallop provided an overview of Hampton Dept of Human Service's BPC and other historical events related to their system of care. Ms. Gallop's timeline included the number of children in foster care, the number of those children who were in a congregate care setting, and the number of children and youth served by CSA. Beginning in 1997 there were approximately 268 children in foster care and approximately 396 children being served by CSA. Hampton became a BPC team in 2002 and along the way continued to implement very creative and innovative programs. As Hampton implemented new programs and worked with the BPC team, foster care and congregate care placement numbers began to decline. Down from 281 children in care and 32 in congregate placements, today Hampton can report

approximately 44 children in foster care and no children in a congregate placement. Also, as Hampton moved towards serving children and families in the community, the number of children and youth receiving services paid for by CSA has increased to 576. Ms. Gallop enthusiastically reported that their success can be linked directly to the judge that was willing to talk with social workers and listen to them. He was able to restructure the juvenile court process in a way that is more effective for those involved.

Janice Allen provided an overview of Louisa County's BPC and their experience as a small, rural locality that has experienced a change in judicial leadership. Louisa joined the BPC program in 2003. Since that time there have been three judges and several local department director changes. Louisa is planning on attending the new BPC conference in the fall of 2015 to bring the new judge on board and refocus the team. Ms. Allen highlighted several of the BPC team's successful past projects. In 2010, the judge implemented the Bench Card Process to provide guidance on how to work with families. Bench cards provide areas of focus for the judge that included questions related to safety, permanency, and well being. The judge shared the bench card with the local department and held a mock hearing to explain what things she was interested in learning about. This experience helped the social workers have a better understanding of the court process so they could help families have a better understanding. The BPC team made the decision in 2013, after a change in judicial leadership that it would be helpful for each team member to make a short presentation about their individual role including what they can and cannot do. In addition, the team also decided that there needed to be meeting agendas and minutes for each meeting. These small steps have helped the team come together and have much more effective meetings. The Louisa team is currently applying for a mini-grant that might cover several proposed projects. They would like to create an orientation video for Dependency/Foster Care cases, create a court proceeding notebook, create a handbook for Child Dependency cases and create a parenting class follow up program. The Louisa team is also very focused on expanding involvement of faith-based organizations in work with the children, youth and families it serves.

CIP is dedicated to providing support of all the BPC and one way they can do so is to provide data to the teams. Lori Battin presented information on monitoring J&DR court compliance with child dependency case time guidelines. She provided a detailed look at several measures they are tracking including: Time to Disposition Hearing, Time to First Permanency Hearing, Time to Filing of Petition for Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights, and Time to Subsequent Permanency Hearings. Overall, the courts and DSS are meeting the timelines. There is still work to be done to bring the numbers down, however, there appears to be a strong partnership in place that is working towards success. CIP provides reports on each measure they collect to the judges which in turn can help them see if there are issues that need to be addressed.

Learning Collaborative

Carl Ayers spoke to the group about the Learning Collaborative initiative. Mr. Ayers provided background including information on the Virginia Children's Services System Transformation and other actions that led up to Transformation beginning in 2007. He highlighted several statistics including increases in Discharges to Permanency (reunification, placement with relative, or adoption); increases in Family Based Placement (foster homes); increases in Foster Care Monthly Worker Visits; and increases in

Adoptions. The Learning Collaborative series has been designed to help enhance current practice around Service Assessment, Planning and Delivery and to improved outcomes for Virginia's children and families.

A Learning Collaborative (LC) is a learning approach that offers a series of convening's that focus on promoting the delivery of identified best practices across multiple settings by creating changes within originations that support the delivery of effective practices. The LC format brings multiple localities together to receive information from experts in the field. Participants will receive technical assistance, and peer support regarding best practice delivery and implementation. The LC format supports the development of individualized team action plans which will be used to advance implementation efforts in their respective localities which ultimately leads to sustained systems change in direct service delivery. There are 18 local departments, making up 15 teams, which are piloting LC. There are five people to a team.

There will be a series of three Learning Collaborative meetings that include "Study, Act, Plan, Do" cycle to incorporate changes. The first meeting was held on November 18 and 19 and was focused on enhanced Family Engagement. The second LC will be held on March 18 and 19 and will focus on trauma informed case management and the need for a full understanding of the need and options for monitoring the appropriate use of psychotropic medications for youth. The third LC will be held in July or August 2015 and will focus on service planning and the integration of the CANS in the comprehensive service planning process throughout Prevention, Child Protection, and Permanency.

Training Update

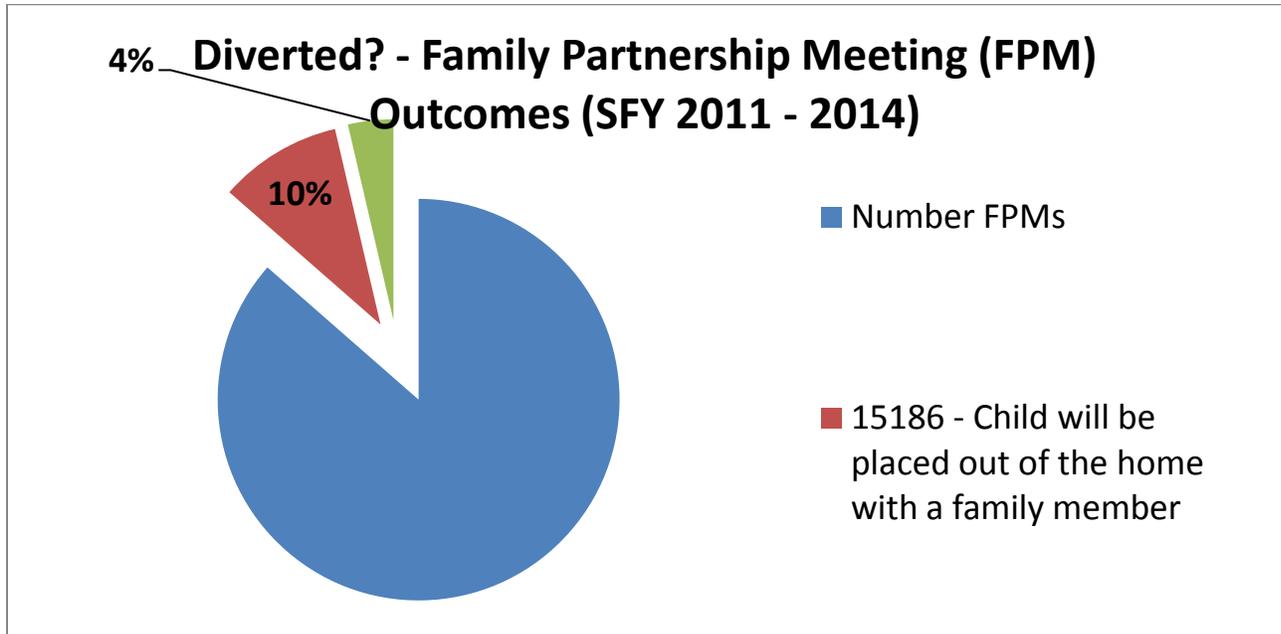
Judy Gundy provided the group with the training update. There is now a collaborative space in the Knowledge Center for Family Engagement related materials. There is a space for resources related to Family Engagement as well as a blog and FAQs. There is also a calendar where Family Engagement related events can be added.

There is a new trauma related collaborative training that is being offered to DSS, DJJ, corrections, schools and DCJS. There will be 11 sessions and a SME workshop in the spring. The focus is on how systems can work together for kids who have experienced trauma. In addition to trauma training, training around transitional planning for youth has been developed. There is a video presentation for youth transitioning out of care about the importance of planning and a more traditional training for case workers.

Diversion Update

Craig Patterson spoke to the group about the Diversion Workgroup. The workgroup was formed to provide clear and consistent guidance around Diversion practices across the state. The workgroup will also be used to provide input to the creation of regulations that was required by legislation from the last General Assembly session. Currently, there is work being done around decision points and an assessment guide for diversion situations.

The workgroup has begun to examine if there is any data linked to diversion. There will be a sub-committee to review data. There is not much data out there now but there is data taken from OASIS about decisions from Family Partnership Meetings.



SFY	Number FPMs	15186 - Child will be placed out of the home with a family member	15183 - Child will be moved from an out of home placement to a family member	Number Outcomes
2011	3064	304	138	4352
2012	4761	570	186	6485
2013	5665	677	230	7837
2014	5600	637	251	7733
Total:	19,090	2,188	805	26,407

It is recognized that the information that is available from OASIS is information that is associated with a case, meaning in all likelihood there is formal child welfare activity already taking place with the child. In an effort to capture more data about diversion practices a question has been added to the Physical Removal screen in OASIS. The question is "Did the child stay with a relative or other caretaker for more than a few days as an alternative to removal (diversion)... In the past year Yes or No At any point in time Yes or No?"

Mr. Ayers wrapped up the meeting and requested the group suggest agenda items and issues to be discussed. There was one suggestion from the group to show data related to Discharges to Permanency broken out by reason the child entered care and by age and other demographics. Mr. Ayers also requested volunteers from local departments to present best/promising practices. Any agenda items or suggestions can be sent to Deborah Eves (deborah.eves@dss.virginia.gov). The meeting adjourned at 12:30. The next CWAC meeting will be in March 2015.