

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES COLLABORATIVE COMMISSION
MEETING NOTES – OCTOBER 13, 2021
VIRTUAL

ATTENDANCE

Ingrid Bynum	Laura Durham	Kelley Organek
Catherine Clinger	Kate Garvey	Maile Organek
Julie Crawford	Claudette Haynes	Dianara Saget
Jessica Cuddy	Amanda Hazelwood	Christina Sherlock
Rose Dawson	Kurt Huffman	Lou Whiting
	Mike Mackey	

Excused Absent

Councilman Canek Aguirre	Jacinta Greene
Councilwoman Amy Jackson	Heather Thornton
Dana Chambers	
Angela Green	
J. Glenn Hopkins	

Unexcused Absent

Annabelle O’Keefe
Nicola Harris
Justin Williams

Staff

Shawn Brown Chelsea Eickert
Noraine Buttar Dr. Stacey Hardy-Chandler

Guests

John Contreras
Allen Lomax

WELCOME

CYFCC Chair, Amanda Hazelwood welcomed the Commission, guests, and new Commissioner, Catherine Clinger, to the meeting. Everyone was invited to introduce themselves.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Kelley Organek gave public comment on the climate of the City Council meeting when discussing safety at ACPS. Members were reminded that the public comment period is designated for members of the public.

OLD BUSINESS –PRESENTATION ON ACPS SAFETY AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

Commissioners were referred to the Board and Commissions Member Handbook because going forward, the Commission will align its behavior and conduct with the guidelines outlined in the Handbook.

Chair Amanda Hazelwood gave a brief overview of the City Council meeting that took place the previous night. Council decided to reinstate the Student Resource Officer Program in ACPS for the rest of school year, effective immediately. To understand how the offices within ACPS are working together to achieve student safety, the Chair turned the floor over to Dr. Julie Crawford and John Contreras to share what the rest of the year looks like and what the Schools need.

Dr. Julie Crawford introduced John Contreras, the Director of Safety and Security Services at ACPS. The Office of Safety and Security Services works very closely with the Office of Student Services and Equity to make things smoother in the school environment when it comes to behavior and assigning discipline. For example, when ACPS started the ALICE program, the Office of Student Services was instrumental in implementing the program.

Moving forward, the goal of Safety and Security Services is to provide good data. The Office never had the opportunity to collect data or implement the MOU after signing it. From now on, the Office will make sure that data is collected to tell the proper story and to make sure the community knows about it.

John Contreras reviewed the Safety and Security Services that the Office provides, including Emergency Management Services and technology services like video cameras and surveillance systems. The Office prioritizes security in all school locations in close partnership with Alexandria Police Department.

Dr. Julie Crawford added that communication is also an important element towards creating safe learning environments. Securely, a software monitoring system for Chromebooks that students use, alerts administrators if students are searching specific terms related to their personal safety. ACPS responds appropriately depending on the situation, which includes communication with the Police Department.

Question: Who determines when there is a violation, the lockup of the student?

Answer: ACPS has no authority over making those types of decisions. The Court Services Unit does.

Question: Will the exact same SROs be reestablished? Is there a plan to train and integrate the SROs back into the ACPS?

Answer: Yes, the SROs that were there in the spring are the same ones that are returning now. They already have completed all the required training.

Question: How is ACPS working to reduce exposure to disciplinary action and entry into the juvenile justice system?

Answer: The State has a new reporting system called the SBAR, which provides guidelines on how to respond and report student behavior. Most cases do not turn into a criminal referral. The [ACPS Student Code of Conduct](#) is another resource that ACPS uses when responding to situations. ACPS is moving away from punitive measures to more restorative ones unless a call to the police is warranted. ACPS is aware of the overrepresentation of Black, Hispanic, male, and English Language Learner groups among suspension rates.

Question: What are you finding is leading to the disproportionate suspension rates among Black and Hispanic Students.

Answer: SBAR is going to help illuminate patterns among referrals. Inconsistent implementation of consequences across schools and implicit bias are probable factors. The [Equity Dashboard](#) and [Equity Audit](#) and a [summary](#) of the Audit is online.

Question: Are there types of Peer Remediation programs at ACPS? Aren't the protocols the same for every school?

Answer: ACPS does not do misdemeanors; ACPS gives a tiered level of consequences. See the [ACPS Code of Conduct](#).

Question: Is there still an opportunity to support the safety of our children? Where do we submit our ideas to?

Answer: Additional supports and interventions were put into place in response to COVID trauma, grief, and loss.

SRO FUNDING REALLOCATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

The Commission received an update from the Director of the Center for Children and Families, Dr. Stacey Hardy-Chandler, on the hiring of new positions within the Center for Children and Families. Two Senior Therapist positions, one bilingual, has been hired and is being onboarded. The second Senior Therapist position just closed, and the interview process is underway. The Human Services Specialist position is open and closes October 17th. The Therapist Supervisor position that oversees the other therapists closes tomorrow. In partnership with ACPS, the Center is acting quickly to fill those roles with a focus on early intervention and prevention. These supports provide a continuum of addressing needs and supplement already established school-based supports that have already been in place for years.

Director of the Court Services Unit, Mike Mackey provided an update on the Alexandria Mentoring Partnership (AMP) Coordinator role. In 2006, with many community stakeholders, the AMP was formed. The AMP never had a dedicated staff person to coordinate it; instead, it was always part of someone else's job. The goal for the position is to increase and enhance mentoring in the City of Alexandria and to support the Children and Youth Community Plan in ensuring more children have caring adults in their lives. The Court Services Unit is hoping to have the position onboarded in November.

The Health Department is also hiring an additional staff person for the Teen Wellness Center; the position will be focused on supporting students' treatment and overall health and helping students follow up on referrals. This is a well-rounded approach to student safety and well-being.

Question: Do the SROs have the authority to suspend students?

Answer: Let's not mix suspensions with safety and security. SROs do not have the authority to suspend.

Question: What do the mental health professionals do on a day-to-day basis and how will students access these specialists?

Answer: These positions will be based at the middle schools, in addition to the positions already based at the high schools. The Center for Children and Families will continue to work collaboratively with ACPS to create a system that supports students holistically.

Question: Are there any gaps with mentoring?

Answer: There is always a shortage of adults able and willing to volunteer as a mentor. The Coordinator will work on that issue, as well as with faith-based organizations and businesses to meet this need.

NEW BUSINESS – LEGISLATIVE AND BUDGET PRIORITIES

The Commission review missed the deadline to submit legislative priorities. The CYFCC Chair reviewed policy recommendations from the Children and Youth Community Plan that the CYFCC could take and then opened the floor to discussion on budget and policy priorities. The following priorities were identified by the Commission:

1. Developmental Relationships Training
2. Steering Committee of Youth
3. Continued Funding for mental health positions and coordination
4. Implementing Restorative Practices within all ACPS locations
5. Funding for implicit bias training
6. A position that tracks and monitors data that relates to Children, Youth, and Families

This list will be refined by the Goals Groups and then a letter will be drafted by the Executive Committee and submitted to Council.

NEW BUSINESS – MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH

Due to time constraints, the Commission was unable to discuss in detail how to recruit and maintain a diverse membership. This was assigned to the Racial Equity Committee to make sure the CYFCC is representative of the people it serves. The City Council has been asked to defer to make any decisions until the end of November. A letter from the Chair will follow.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.