



Latino Advisory Council

Meeting with Director George Sheldon- May 15, 2015 Minutes

Chair-Person:

Alex Medina

Chair-Elect:

Norma Machay

Scribe:

Jennifer Contreras

DCFS Members:

Carmen Alvarez
Juanita Calderon
Rebecca Crnovich
Beatriz Ramirez
Nancy Rodriguez

POS Members:

Yeni Jimenez
Karla Soriano

Ex-officio Members:

Jose J. Lopez, OLS
Lourdes Rodriguez,
Burgos Coordinator

Sub-committees:

Child Safety and
Permanency

Community Risk
Reduction and
Staffing

Data validity and
Disproportionality

Strategic
Communications

Latino Family
Institute

Present with Director George Sheldon: Carolyn Ross, Keith Langston.

LAC members: Alex Medina, Jennifer Contreras, Beatriz Ramirez, Rebecca Crnovich, Yeni Jimenez, Juanita Calderon, Nancy Rodriguez, Jose Lopez, Lourdes Rodriguez and Norma Machay.

I. Welcome and Introductions

- Alex introduced the Latino Advisory Council and provided Director Sheldon and Keith Langston with a copy of the Latino Advisory Council history, Agenda, and Cultural Resource Guide.

II. LAC Concerns; Violations to policy that affect the safety and well-being of children in care.

a. Shortage of Bilingual Staff/Recruitment

- Alex discussed his extensive years of experience working with the Department of Children and Family Services and how he has seen a trend of policy being replaced by practice.
- There is a statewide crisis of bilingual staff recruitment. Ex, Rockford- lack of employees at all levels; DCP, ACR and Placement workers.

b. Retention

- Fragmentation of communication between Office of Employment Services (OES) and Office of Latino Services (OLS), Burgos Coordinator and Office of Affirmative Action.
- Director's concern is that he has 19 silos and is trying to manage them all but knows it's impossible to do so.
- Director Sheldon stated how we all need to focus on the needs of the child and not focus on providers.
- Alex brought up policy driven solutions;
- Provide training & certification to upper & middle management according to Burgos Consent Decree.
- Provide training to front line staff

- Engage OES to collaborate with Burgos Coordinator, OLS & Affirmative Action.
- Some Public Service Administrators should be Spanish speaking as well.
- Norma agreed to come up with a document of examples and email them to Carolyn and cc the Director and Burgos coordinator.
- Keith Langston stated that everyone in the meeting is making valid points and he will like solutions that will be put in practice on a daily basis.

c. Lack of Burgos Homes

- For 3-4 years, there has not been a foster home recruitment plan but there is approximately 1.5 million in place for it in staff salaries.
- Director stated that he is aware of the disconnect between the IMSA & SACWIS and he is looking at a new system called, Case Book. The new system is in its planning phase as SACWIS is outdated. Director is requesting investment from the governor to invest in technology and training.
- Beatriz described the lack of Burgos homes and how it affects the excessive stay at residential facilities and in shelters.
- DCFS should be looking into limiting number of days & stays in residential facilities.
- Beatriz brought up an example of how as a CWS, she has to have a weekly meeting with the shelter staff to discuss her efforts of finding placement for her clients.
- Rebecca brought up the fact that the licensing recruitment is fragmented and there is no guidance from anyone.
- Director stated he will like to meet in the next two weeks and will like to talk about what he wants to do about foster parent recruitment.
- Rebecca stated she feels it's about engagement and there has been no consistency in foster parent recruitment.

III. Other

- Director Sheldon informed scribe that for ongoing meetings he would like for LAC to communicate with his secretary, Tanesha McGhee-Davis and he would like to schedule a meeting with LAC in 3 weeks.
- Director Sheldon requested that LAC provide recommendations on how to address concerns presented today in writing.

- LAC provided Director Sheldon with the Cultural Resource Guide. Director Sheldon stated he will have Keith Langston put the Cultural Resource Guide online.