



# Citizen Review Panel

District of Columbia

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

Tuesday, September 10, 2024

6:30 to 8:30 PM

## DRAFT MINUTES

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**Present:** Pierrea Wallace, Chair; Shana Bartley, Vice-Chair

**Panel members:** Patrick Foley, Wanda Thompson, Elizabeth Mohler, Emily Bloomfield, Meghan Schott, Theresa Gibson

**Absent Members:** Mattie Cheek

**New members awaiting official confirmation:** Carolyn Woods, Andrew Miller

**Absent new members awaiting official confirmation:** Dr. Tyra Moore, Whitney Miller

**CFSA:** Roni Seabrook

**Facilitation team:** Margie Chalofsky and Toni Carr

**Community work group member:** Rick Bardach

**Guests:**

Maquita Alexander

Betsy Crumb, Managing attorney from Child Advocacy program/ DC Volunteer Lawyers

Christian Billy - Howard University student visiting DC meetings

Kierra McClean - Howard University visiting DC meetings

### Welcome/Introductions

Panel members, facilitation team, potential new members and public observers introduced themselves. The quorum was met, as was satisfaction of public notice. Minutes from July 2024 were approved with no edits and the agenda was approved with one modification that CFSA will not present at this evenings meeting

### Member Sharing

Dr. Meghan S. presented our Member Sharing for this meeting.

Margie C. explained to guests about the purpose of member sharing. Dr. Schott explained that she knew she wanted to be a child psychiatrist in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. She gave us highlights of her career so far. One thing she is very proud of is that her team won the Core Values Team Award at Children's National in 2022. It was through this work, where she built the child psychiatric emergency department, that she developed relationships with CFSA and developed her interest in serving on the CRP panel. Although she will be moving out of DC, Dr. Schott will stay on the Prevention Workgroup as a community volunteer,

Pierrea W. expressed liking the process of member sharing/getting to know each other.

## **Facilitator Report and Updates**

Margie C. gave updates on MOTA and Council appointments. Our four potential new members on the Council side (Dr. Tyra Moore, Carolyn Woods, Whitney Miller, and Andy Miller) all had their confirmation hearings. Additionally, Dr. Wanda Thompson, Shana Bartley and Elizabeth Mohler had their reconfirmation hearings. We are waiting to hear about the Council votes. We have four openings on the Mayoral (MOTA) side. Margie C. will be joining Tiera Williams of MOTA to interview candidates. She was not able to get permission to include panel members on that interview team. It is the plan to hold Dr. Meghan S. slot for someone with lived experience per our panel conversation in July.

We still need someone to step up to be CRP Treasurer when Patrick F. officially leaves the panel. Additionally, Shana B. would like to pass on the Vice-Chair role. That would need to be someone appointed on the Council side. The Treasurer could be appointed from either side.

The facilitators would like to see if we could pull off a Fall in person gathering and will send out a doodle poll.

We had thought that the Youth Aging Out Group might need to go through CFSA's IRB process because of surveying "live subjects." Although the youth will be 18-21, they are still in care. After meeting with Dr. Brandynicole Brooks at CFSA and then submitting information about our process to keep responses anonymous, we were granted an exemption. Dr. Meghan S. offered that she has IRB experience should we need it in the future.

Margie C. shared some key points made by the panel at our last meeting in July. We were discussing what is working well and what is not working well in our structure. Some highlights from that conversation:

- CRP panel members are busy people; because of our appointment process we usually too stay too small, which impacts progress.
- The bifurcated appointment process is cumbersome and very unusual nationwide. Correspondingly, the nomination and confirmation process can take a long time. Additionally, appointments are typically handled in batches, not when there is an individual vacancy. This all leads to challenges in having a full working panel at any time.
- We discussed the possibility of advocating for a simpler process with fewer barriers. It was decided that we should find out the history of why the legislation was written this way and whether anyone on the Council or Mayoral side are currently committed to keeping it that way. Margie C. shared that she spoke with our contact Christian Washington on the Council Chairman's staff. They agreed that he would look into the history of the legislation and Margie C. would look into the process in other jurisdictions.
- We discussed the Listening sessions we wanted to do in the community in order to prioritize hearing from those with lived experience. We created an informal workgroup to start to plan next steps. There is money in the budget for a community forum. Dr. Wanda T. made the point that we all might have more networks than we might think to get

community input, so we need to design a centralized way to capture the information we receive.

- We discussed that in addition to hearing community voices, we are missing birth parent experiences in our panel membership and that the Community Forum might lead us to some of those potential members as well. It was suggested that research projects might feel daunting for members we may want to recruit, and that we could also include practice-based projects in our work. We also discussed the possibility of providing a stipend to summer interns to do some of the heavy data lifting, so it isn't so daunting on members.
- Pierrea W. expressed appreciation for Margie's C. work. Margie C. in turn thanked Pierrea W. and Shana B. for their partnership.

### **Fiscal Report**

Patrick Foley, Treasurer, presented the fiscal report. He reminded members that the complete budget and back up are on the board portal. We received our first payment from CFSA and the second should come in Feb or March. Patrick reminded members that he needs someone to take over the Treasurer role. Pierrea W. voiced appreciation to Patrick for helping to fill his position.

### **Family Time Workgroup Presentation**

Dr. Wanda T. and Pierrea W. presented their project. Margie C. explained about the workgroups to observers.

[Link to the Family Time workgroup presentation here.](#)

### **Questions asked:**

1. Patrick F.: How long will it take to do 187 files?  
Response: Not sure yet because they don't know what the files will actually look like. how they are organized, or the ease of getting information. Roni Seabrook, our CFSA monitor, is pulling records on 174 distinct children, including notes at placement, court reports and visitation logs. Roni Seabrook. and program staff will walk through it with the workgroup. Pierrea W.: Hope to be able to pull from data but maybe they might need to pivot to conduct more interviews.
2. Maquita Alexander: Are you thinking about kids living with others that parents who aren't in foster care or only those in foster care? This is an impact recognized in schools, that kids can miss family time with mom and dad if living with relatives.  
Response: Definitely looking at family time with birth parents of those children in licensed kinship foster homes, but not in informal kin arrangements.
3. Margie C. expressed appreciation to Roni Seabrook and invited the workgroup to let us know if they need more volunteers. She also pointed out that she has put funds aside for evaluator hours for YAO workgroup that can also be used for this workgroup.

**Formal vote on workgroup project**

Margie C. expressed that she thinks that we are supposed to vote as a full panel on projects and wasn't sure if we had done it earlier on, so we held a formal vote. All official voting members present were in favor of this project.

Margie C. applauded the presentation and Pierrea W. stated her appreciation for working with Dr. Wanda T.. The conversation about the presentation then continued.

- Margie C. expressed being struck by the data in the presentation that stated that DC's reunification rates are the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest in the nation! She wondered if it could perhaps relate to removing fewer children/ those who have more trauma? But since the data also shows that the primary reason for taking children into care in DC is neglect, not abuse, that rationale wouldn't make sense.
- Dr. Meghan S. suggested that we might compare our data with cities instead of states.
- Pierrea W. stated that other urban cities would probably compare with DC because Black and Brown children are more likely to be separated permanently from their birth families as well as wait in foster care for longer periods of time. She reiterated that since our cases come in largely due to neglect, the low reunification numbers are disturbing. Our goal should be to provide services to keep families whole, not to "protect" children from their families by separation unless absolutely necessary.
- Dr. Wanda T. suggested that it would be interesting to hear input from the community forums/town halls regarding the practice of separation and reunification.

**Public Comments-** There were no public comments. Margie C. typed her email in the chat in case the guests want to get in touch with us to volunteer or for questions etc. Patrick F. informed the observers that they can help on workgroups as community members even if not on the panel.

**Closing and Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 8:00 pm

Future CRP Meetings	
Date	*Location
January 14, 2025	Zoom
March 11, 2025	Zoom
May 13, 2025	Zoom

\*Location subject to change

**Questions:** Pierrea Wallace, Chairperson, [pierreanaketa@gmail.com](mailto:pierreanaketa@gmail.com)