

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES COLLABORATIVE COMMISSION
MEETING NOTES – JUNE 9, 2021
VIRTUAL

ATTENDANCE

Ingrid Bynum	Amanda Hazelwood	Kelly Organek
Jessica Cuddy	Kurt Huffman	Maile Organek
Nicola Harris	Mike Mackey	Lou Whiting
Claudette Haynes	Annabelle O’Keefe	Justin Williams

Excused Absent

Councilman Canek Aguirre	Angela Green	Amy Jackson
Dana Chambers	Jacinta Greene	Davina Littles
Julie Crawford	Garrison Hayes	Christina Sherlock
Laura Durham	J. Glenn Hopkins	Heather Thornton
Kate Garvey		

Unexcused Absent

Staff

Dr. Stacey Hardy-Chandler
Shawn Brown
Robin Crawley
Chelsea Eikert

WELCOME

CYFCC Chair, Kelley Organek welcomed the Commission to the meeting.

REVIEW CYFCC MAY MINUTES

The Commission reviewed and approved the minutes with some modifications.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None.

OLD BUSINESS - COMMITTEE UPDATES

GOAL 1 UPDATES

The Committee met and discussed presenting the CYMP 2025 to the Gang Task Force, which has been postponed. The Committee also announced that Javaughn Owens resigned from the Commission and is no longer the Chair of Goal Group 1.

GOAL 2 UPDATES

None.

GOAL 3 UPDATES

Goal Group 3 reported that they had met and learned more about their goal to understand barriers.

RACIAL EQUITY COMMITTEE - PRESENTATION

The Racial Equity Committee reported that when they met, they discussed how they have spent the last few months laying the foundation for issues that relate to race and equity, defining terms, and creating a

safe environment. Moving forward, the Committee aims to carry out the Children and Youth Master Plan using a racial equity lens. The CYMP 2025 was informed by many community members through a robust community engagement and planning process. Research Packets on various issues were developed by the CYMP Coordinator using the Results-Based Accountability framework to prepare stakeholders ahead of each weekly planning meeting.

Each of these research packets included information on the negative factors that contribute to the problem we're trying to solve in Alexandria (i.e. youth depression, substance use, social disconnection, etc.) and the barriers that youth and families face when accessing supports. To help everyone see the common barriers and negative factors that cut across all Goal Groups, Jamica Littles from the RE Committee gave a presentation on the Barriers to Childhood Success. See power point attached. After the presentation, Commissioners were asked to identify any common barriers that they saw. They named early adversity, trauma, adults not listening to youth, youths' perception of adults engaging with them, lack of time to consistently engage youth, lack of awareness of services, and stigma related to receiving services and feeling judged. Commissioners acknowledged that building developmental assets, promoting positive experiences to minimize the effects of trauma, centering youth voices, and helping them to navigate systems are things that will help remove barriers in our community.

Next steps are to use the information to guide analysis when looking at policies and practices in the City of Alexandria that contribute to inequitable outcomes and create barriers. Goal Groups were encouraged to look at any existing policies and procedures in the City to determine if they are leading to inequitable outcomes and identify and close any existing data gaps.

EMERGING ISSUES - ABSENTEEISM AND LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY

Because Goal Group 2 has been looking at student engagement, absenteeism, and truancy rates over the last several months, they invited Dr. Marcia Jackson, Director of Student Services at ACPS, to attend the meeting and field questions. The Commission learned that Quarter Three data were not available at this time so Dr. Jackson said her office was checking with Accountability Department to see what the status is on that data. The School Board has not received these data either.

What are the actions to address attendance issues within ACPS?

ACPS uses a three-tiered process for several attendance and behavioral concerns.

- Tier 1: Interventions done at this level are for everybody. Activities include promoting positive attendance, pointing students to positive adults in the building when in need of help, and ensuring that students and families are aware of the resources that exist. When students have 1-5 days of absence, this prompts a social worker to reach out to the student to understand what's going on.
- Tier 2: When a student has more than 5 days of absence, more interventions are applied. During COVID, some students with no prior absenteeism history are now having attendance issues. Outreach efforts are made to ensure students and families know what the attendance expectations are; families are asked how ACPS can support their student and remove any barriers. The Attendance Review Panel process brings people from across the City to engage in problem-solving to make education more accessible.
- Tier 3: When a student has missed 10 or more days, social workers and truancy specialist do Home/Door Knock visits if they can't reach families through daily phone calls, emails, and letters to the home. They do this to better understand what is going on and getting in the way of attending school. Home Visits have been proven to be successful.

Principals have worked together to brainstorm solutions to removing barriers. Chronically absent students have been made a priority for returning to in-person learning and fostering the "want" to be back in school. Principals are actively working to create a positive and inviting environment by nurturing

supportive relationships, understanding what the barriers are, and sending messages to students like, “When you’re absent, we don’t have the benefit of your presence.”

Are the strategies working?

It’s been a challenge, a monumental task, and a learning experience. Kids who may not be engaged in school may be helping their families. During Quarterly Data Chats, ACPS Principals are sharing what has been successful that can be replicated across all schools. It is important to note that Third Quarter data may look different because of the SEAL Mondays and the return to the physical classroom. SEAL provides additional support to the students struggling emotionally and it seems to be working.

In terms of capacity and funding, what can this Commission advocate for to get students back into school?

SEAL Monday and the Ruler Program acknowledges the trauma that students are experiencing caused by or made worse by the dual pandemics. The program helps students identify and regulate their emotions. Because student trauma will be a significant factor that affects the transition back to in-person learning, ACPS is looking to grow the Equity division. Two more mental health specialists and attendance specialists will be hired to connect with students and create positive nurturing school environments. ACPS is also looking at class sizes to ensure teachers can develop relationships with their students.

ACPS is also engaging parents through a survey to understand their needs and use funding to meet those needs. Family engagement is important for understanding how ACPS can support students’ behavioral health, so funding is needed to expand these efforts.

EMERGING ISSUE – STUDENT RESOURCE OFFICERS

To play a more active role in the decision-making process where children, youth, and families are concerned, the CYFCC will align its calendar next year with the legislative calendar. The CYFCC will also start the upcoming year with a letter to Council, letting them know that the CYFCC wants to be part of the decision-making process moving forward. This will be a way for Amanda Hazelwood to introduce herself to the Council as the new CYFCC Chair.

NEW BUSINESS - ELECTION FOR CHAIR-ELECT

There was a call for nominations from the floor, and a motion to move Jessie Cuddy as Chair Elect.

NEW BUSINESS - PLAN FOR NEXT FISCAL YEAR

Chair Elect, Amanda Hazelwood presented her plans for the year ahead for continuing momentum. She will be asking the Commission to work over the summer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.