

Children's Planning Council Meeting

May 17, 2006

9:30 a.m.

Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 140
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California 90012

Present: Philip Browning
Dave Cantu
Samuel Q. Chan, representing Marv Southard
Priscilla Charles-Carter
Deborah Davies
Lupe Delgado, representing Darline Robles
Nancy Diaz, representing Bryce Yokomizo
Amy Enomoto-Perez
Jeff Farber
Dorothy Fleisher
Teri Gillam, representing David Sanders
Cynthia Harding, representing Bruce Chernof
Kathy House, representing David Janssen
Richelle Rios Huizar
Penny Markey, representing Margaret Donnellan Todd
Kaye Michaelson, representing Russ Guiney
Colleen Mooney
Elisa Nicholas
Terry Ogawa
Michi Okana
José Ramos
Lisa Cleri Reale
Bruce Saltzer
Nina Sorkin
Beatriz Olvera Stotzer
Norma Sturgis, representing Roy Romer
Anita Vigil, representing Robert Taylor
Sharon G. Watson
Phillip L. Williams

Staff: Yolie Flores Aguilar
Paula Angeles
Ernesto De Guzman
Renee Loza
Deanna Martinez
Noah Smith
Laura Valles

In the absence of Chair Zev Yaroslavsky, who was attending a firefighter's memorial service in Whittier, Phillip Williams brought the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and asked that Council members and the audience introduce themselves.

Approval of the Minutes of March 15, 2006

With the correction that Wendy Schiffer represented incoming Department of Health Services director Bruce Chernof, the minutes as mailed were approved by acclamation.

The Impact of the Governor's Budget on Children and Families: Jonathan Freedman

Jonathan Freedman reviewed the Chief Administrative Officer's memorandum to the Board of Supervisors regarding the May revision to the governor's proposed budget (initially released in January 2006). California faces a continuing structural deficit, but not nearly at the catastrophic levels of two years ago. For the current budget year, 2006–07, the budget deficit is between \$4 and \$5 billion; if the budget as revised were adopted now, the 2007–08 deficit would be approximately \$2 billion. Since January, the governor has assumed (and the legislative analyst has confirmed) \$7 billion more in revenues for both this year and the next, which means that the gap could be closed for next year.

Some new spending is proposed, though not anything significant, and risks still exist for health and human service programs.

Almost \$3 million in new dollars will go to catching up on the state's suspended obligations to K–12 education, mandated by Proposition 98. Education is still not financed to the degree that some feel appropriate, and litigation is pending. Additional new dollars will go to accelerated payments on the state's debt and to building a larger reserve for economic uncertainties. The primary beneficiary of new spending is the justice area, including the continued funding of the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Action. Modest new spending will go to health services, including a proposal for bridge funding to accommodate children who are on waiting lists for county children's health initiative programs, and \$400 million for public-health emergency preparedness. No significant growth in CalWORKs funding is included, though some cuts proposed in January have been taken off the table. Cost of living adjustments for SSI/SSP recipients have been deferred for 9 months instead of 15, but no cost of living adjustments are proposed for CalWORKs. A substantial portion of CalWORKs funds have been set aside to implement new Federal TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families) requirements that seek to increase work participation rates. In child welfare, \$35.5 million has been allocated for first-year costs to implement the Title IV-E waiver.

The risks encompassed by the proposed budget include a reduction from current spending for Proposition 36, the diversion program for drug use crimes (from \$143 million to \$120 million); and a paltry increase (\$19 million) to AB 3632 financing, to identify children with Individual Education Plans who need mental health services (Los Angeles County will see only about \$3 million of these funds). A statewide cut in funding of \$114 million for CalWORKs child care (40 percent of which will come from Los Angeles County) was made in January, and increases the impact of the new work participation requirements, since if more parents work, more support services will be needed.

Because of this being an election year, Freedman anticipates a tight timeline for budget discussions in the legislature, with budget committees hearing testimony over the next six weeks and an on-time budget approval expected by July 1.

Proposal to Oppose H.R. 4437: Samuel Q. Chan for Beatriz Olvera Stotzer

Sam Chan presented a proposal from Beatriz Olvera Stotzer (the Council's Latino community representative), Larry Lue (its Asian/Pacific Islander community representative), and Cheryl Branch (its African-American community representative) asking that the Children's Planning Council's take a *no* position on H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. An overview of the bill's major provisions was sent to Council members earlier in the week and included in today's packets; the Council's Strengthening Community Capacity Committee approved the community representatives' proposal at its last meeting. The Board of Supervisors took a *no* position on the bill on March 28, 2006.

The community representatives view this proposed legislation, Chan said, as an egregious violation of basic civil and human rights that will have dramatic and negative repercussions on thousands of children and families in Los Angeles County, as well as harming millions of citizen children across the United States. Education is one of this country's most sacred rights for children, yet immigration raids are already occurring at schools in the Antelope Valley and eastern parts of the county, and parents are afraid to send their children to school.

On the day of the immigration marches, SPA/AIC Council staff were unsure of how to respond to youth seeking their support, since the Children's Planning Council as a whole had not taken a position on the issue. The Council has committed to help strengthen the capacity of communities to act on their own behalf, and the actions of parents and youth in the streets were a perfect example of that. The community representatives believe it is the Council's duty to support those actions, particularly because this issue affects the well-being of children and youth. SPA/AIC Council interest has led staff to plan a training session for parents and youth to build their leadership capacity and help them develop appropriate action strategies in their communities.

While the community representatives agree that appropriate measures are needed to address the issue of immigration, Chan said, they do not believe that this bill is moral, fair, or appropriate. **Chan moved that the Children's Planning Council formally oppose H.R. 4437. Sharon Watson seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

Proposed Children's Planning Council Strategic Plan: Samuel Q. Chan

Sam Chan presented the first draft of a proposed three-year strategic plan for the Children's Planning Council (from 2007 through 2009), the development of which began at a two-day retreat in May 2005. The Council approved a strategic direction in November, and two ad hoc committees met in January through May 2006. Consultant Ira Cutler, author of the Council's ten-year strategic document, *The Tasks Ahead*, was hired to assist in the process.

Key considerations for the plan include building on the Council's successful past, ensuring that its work is community-driven, affirming its commitment to asset-based community development, and incorporating a new area of focus on policy. Also important are continuing the Council's role as a bridge between government and community, aligning and integrating all elements of the plan, moving from planning to action, and remaining flexible.

Three major action strategies are proposed, as well as their desired outcomes by the year 2020:

- **Promoting responsive family-strengthening institutions**, so key child-serving institutions have a culture in place that supports and strengthens families with children, values parents as equal partners in the care of their children, and encourages community-building
- **Mobilizing empowered communities for kids**, so parents, residents, youth, and institutional partners are engaged in a countywide community-building movement to improve the five outcome areas of child well-being
- **Pursuing bold policies to improve children's lives**, so local, state, and Federal policies facilitate Los Angeles County's progress in strengthening families, building community, and improving key indicators across the five outcome areas; and so that local decision-makers respond to policy changes advocated by organized parent and youth networks

The accompanying graphic showed the synergies among these elements as they combine to improve outcomes for children.

- Responsive institutions
 - Focus on building and nurturing strong families
 - Engage parents as equal partners
 - Incorporate flexible funding so community-based organizations can support and strengthen families
 - Maintain strong and effective partnerships between government and community-based organizations
 - Enable shared governance between parents and institutions
- Empowered communities
 - Advocate and build relationships at a local level
 - Make neighborhood-driven change efforts
 - Are led by parents, residents, and youth
 - Use community and ScoreCard data to drive local action
 - Provide data and information that drives the Children's Planning Council policy agenda
- Bold policies
 - Local community decision-makers respond to policy changes advocated by organized parent and youth networks.
 - Strong relationships exist between the Children's Planning Council and policy-makers.
 - The Children's Planning Council influences local, state, and Federal policies.
 - Communities and key partners help frame and shape the policy agenda.

For this plan to succeed, a commitment is needed by all Children's Planning Council members to support and contribute to the strategies and objectives outlined, and to provide ongoing support in particular to the SPA/AIC Councils. Additional staff infrastructure and resources will clearly be needed; that discussion will take place at the Council's July meeting.

Between now and June 30, the draft plan will be presented to key stakeholders, with the strategic planning committee reviewing and incorporating that feedback during the first part of July. The

Council will see a second draft on July 17, and discussions with organizational members about their constituencies' commitment to the plan will take place during the balance of the summer. The Council will consider final approval of the plan on September 20.

Chan thanked those who participated on the strategic planning and policy committees, praising their collective leadership as well as their "wisdom, good energy, and real conviction" about the importance of the process. He then introduced consultant John Ott to facilitate a group discussion of the written overview of desired outcomes, specific strategies, and ultimate objectives for the three-year strategic plan.

Ott characterized the plan's measurable objectives as a framework for the Council to use to decide what to say 'yes' to over the next three years, as well as what to say 'no' to. Though the plan's aim is not to create a structure that is wholly inflexible, asking if a given opportunity aligns with its stated priorities can provide a first level of discipline that will help Council members and staff retain their focus. Today's discussions are not intended to test for consensus, but to clarify the Council's understanding of the draft plan and guide the conversations that lie ahead. Ott asked attendees to break into small groups and take 30 minutes to answer three questions about the plan:

1. What did you hear or read?
2. What did you like about what you heard or read?
3. What questions or concerns do you have now?

Elements of the plan that people **liked** included:

- An increased commitment to action
- Bold policies
- A well-designed graphic
- Its all-inclusive nature and how it hangs together
- Its action orientation
- The plan is "where the rubber hits the road"—an engine, a starting point.
- The first desired outcome is already reflected in the process.
- Communities are being mobilized with concrete objectives.
- Parents and youth are looked at as leaders.
- "It feels feasible, do-able."
- Community involvement and engagement is included in all three areas.
- The three areas interact.
- The plan is "looking for a change in attitude, in the way everyone thinks."
- It's a more creative vehicle, with input coming not just from the top down.
- It calls for stronger partnerships between county government and community organizations.

- “People can find themselves in the document.”
- It makes the shift from being all about programs and services to being about strengthening families.
- It incorporates a ‘best practice’ of communication and influencing attitudes.
- Communities are involved in helping to shape policy.
- Data collection and interpretation is continued.

As the facilitator for the Council’s previous strategic planning process, Ott said that “the document feels fabulous to me,” more refined yet still building on the evolution of past work.

Questions and concerns expressed by attendees included:

- Is the plan too broad? Too hard to measure? More concrete benchmarks and plans for action are needed.
- What about sustainability? Folks are making long-term investments in lives and communities, and more visibility is needed around mobilization.
- The plan should contextualize needs and provide definitions before getting into the ‘meat.’
- Shifts in institutions should not just be encouraged but supported, at the neighborhood level as well as at the county level. This is not a policy shift for the next six months, but for the long term.
- Is three years a practical timeline for implementing this plan? “By the time we get around to doing the work, things may have changed.” Systems don’t necessarily change at identical rates—how will that affect the work? Is the bureaucracy willing to change? How will those put in positions of leadership themselves change?
- Naming 15 organizations to be recognized for their family-strengthening approaches (last bullet in the ‘promote responsive family-strengthening institutions’ objectives) could lead to competition and ill feeling. Can the Council instead produce some guidelines for achieving this end, and some method of self-evaluation, so that all striving for this goal can be affirmed?
- “Are we champions or annoying gnats?” How can the Council develop accountability methods that will transcend the county, cities, community-based organizations, etc., so that everyone is collectively responsible?
- Diversity is not mentioned in the plan. How will cultural differences and identities be addressed?
- Within the long-term reach of the plan, “we don’t want to waste time on things that just ain’t going to happen.” How can those elements be culled early in the process?
- The plan asks for a paradigm shift from services to empowerment. How will that happen?
- Clarify “funding flexibility” (second bullet in the ‘promote responsive family-strengthening institutions’ strategies) to include leveraging resources and developing guidelines.

- The communications strategy to promote the Council's policy agenda (last bullet in the 'pursue bold policies' strategies) needs to be deep enough to span all levels of the plan, focusing both on disseminating information and on processing input. "How can we share what we've learned?"
- The Council must ensure that the data elements being collected (or those proposed) are relevant to communities, telling them what they want to know and not masking conditions. Disaggregation in as many ways as possible should be continued. Data needs to measure the overall success of the plan.
- The plan's objectives for promoting responsive family-strengthening institutions need to be clearer, with more examples; people unfamiliar with the system don't understand.
- Parents must be involved early, but how can the Council connect with and organize them?
- How can the action plan be fleshed out, made relevant at the local level, and achieved?
- No mention of prevention is included in the document.
- Community-building institutions play a key role in the plan, but are they ready to do that? Can they do what the plan calls for?
- The strategy to engage local partners (second bullet of 'pursue bold policies') should be broadened so that other groups also influence the Council, and the Council works collaboratively with others to push agenda items.
- Children's Planning Council meetings and communications are not structured to help implement this plan.
- Influencing the legislative agenda of the county and its 88 cities (fourth bullet, 'pursue bold policies' strategies) seems ambitious. How can this be prioritized and accomplished?
- The document does not address the filtering of issues, concerns, and challenges from the SPA/AIC Councils to the Children's Planning Council for problem-solving.
- Faith-based organizations should be included in the partnership.

In the concluding discussion, José Ramos said that despite concerns, he got a real sense of excitement during the small-group conversation as people talked about clarity, action, and focus. Dorothy Fleisher asked for specifics on moving forward, and Yolie Flores Aguilar explained that presentations on the plan would first be made to the SPA/AIC Councils over the next month, and then to the county-based Interagency Operations Group and New Directions Task Force. After that time (and possibly during) will come a deliberate focus on individual conversations with Children's Planning Council members and their constituent organizations. Elisa Nicholas also urged the inclusion of Neighborhood Action Councils to encourage buy-in at the community level. Lisa Cleri Reale thanked Ira Cutler and Flores Aguilar for their work since last year's retreat and for sorting through all the subsequent discussions to come up with this draft plan.

Ott acknowledged the issues raised regarding the need for stronger, more layered communication and altered structures and processes for the Council. The document expects a different, deeper relationship between the Council and its partners, one in which partners actively engage with this document as part of their work, and one in which the Council also shows itself open to influence by those partners and their agendas. Disciplined and intentional communication must be part of

that new structure, and feedback is essential. "We're asking them not just to applaud our efforts," Ott said, "but to sign on."

Ott closed the presentation by asking members to ponder a final question on which their guidance will be sought during conversations over the next few months: "What would you need in order to start a conversation with your organization about how this framework will affect your partnership with the Children's Planning Council?"

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children's Planning Council is scheduled for:

Wednesday, July 19, 2006
9:30 a.m.
Room 140, Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles

Public Comment

Chrissie Castro, staff to the American Indian Children's Council, said that she has been inspired by the actions of the Children's Planning Council and other bodies in taking a stand on H.R. 4437, especially since she knows how controversial a topic it addresses. "This proves that we care about *all* children and families," she said.

There being no further public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.