



7801 S. State Street, 2nd FL  
Chicago, IL 60619  
773.644.1451  
Greaterchathaminitiative.org

**Greater Chatham Initiative  
Youth & Support Services Committee Meeting  
Held at the Urban Partnership Bank  
7801 S. State Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Chicago, IL 60619  
Friday, March 3, 2017 – 10:00-11:30 a.m.**

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Executive Director Nedra Fears. Fears welcomed and thanked everyone for coming. Individuals in attendance introduced themselves:

Timothy Bridgmon, GCC  
Tracy Occomy Crowder, COFI  
Nedra Sims Fears, GCI  
Jeanette Foreman, J Foreman and Associates  
Ayoka Mota Samuels, Gary Comer Youth Center  
Ernest Sanders, St. Sabina Employment Resource Center  
Nicole Bridges, GCI  
Diara Fleming, Chicago Cares  
Susan Peters, U of C Medical Center  
Ashley Casiello, GCI

**Previous Minutes**

The January 6, 2017 minutes were not available; they will be sent out and approved at the next meeting.

**COFI Update**

COFI submitted an application to GCI for funding of their 3-Phase Peace Center Initiative. It went before the committee in October, and their request was approved. Upon seeing the application, the board recommended that COFI scale up their initial proposal and provide more information on the initiative's impact, sustainability, and metrics on the specific issues their programming sought to correct. The proposal was then sent back to the committee, and a working group made further recommendations. Tracy from COFI, along with Ashley from GCI, worked together to drill down on the necessary data, and have provided answers to the board's initial questions, along with a recommendation of schools to target.

**Review of Proposal:**

COFI plans to implement programming in three schools initially, and hopes to scale up to twelve. Over the course of three years, the initiative will provide parent training in the areas of leadership development, restorative justice, and conflict resolution techniques. The goals of this initiative are reducing the number of misconducts and suspensions, keeping students in the schools and in classrooms, and changing the overall culture within the schools and community at large.

COFI has resubmitted a proposal that includes a planning grant. Before initiating the Peace Centers and leadership training, COFI plans to go into the schools to have a discussion with administration to see how open their school would be to implementing Restorative Justice practices, as well as to have deeper conversations about what is going on with discipline at each school, and to see what these schools perceive their particular issues and needs are.

### School Selection:

Both COFI and Ashley from GCI looked at metrics that would be useful in determining which schools COFI should select for their program. Independently, they both singled out the percentage of misconducts resulting in suspension at each school and the percentage of each school receiving suspension as important factors to consider. The first metric shows how often schools use suspension as a tool to combat misconduct, and the second metric shows how widespread that disciplinary culture is across the school. Ashley additionally selected mobility rate, or the rate at which the schools' populations turn over, as a metric that reflects instability and greater need for intervention.

### **Discussion:**

Question: Which of these schools already have Restorative Justice practices? We have 26 schools and you're selecting 12, how do we know that the schools selected aren't already using Restorative Justice practices? For example, Harvard currently already does.

Nedra: With the planning grant, we would be able to hire someone to go into the schools to see what's already going on, and assess what the schools' needs are, which are already using these practices, and which would be open to using them in the future.

Question: If the focus of the program is to train the parents, and then as a kind of secondary possibility, to train the teachers, how do we ensure the program is sustainable? Some parents will stay at the schools, but most will move on when their children leave, or are highly mobile for other reasons, so how do we ensure counselors and teachers, the permanent elements, can carry on this programming?

Nedra: Tracy has found that when parents are trained, the culture of the school changes and that training and incentive towards using Restorative Justice practices trickles upwards to include the teachers and counselors. COFI also maintains a network of parents who have gone through the training and wish to stay involved, so a support network is always there.

Tracy: There's also room to include additional teacher and counselor training if a particular school believes that it's needed and would be beneficial in sustaining programming and cultural change. Not every school will have a peace center, per se, so each school will use Restorative Justice in different ways according to what is needed and what is useful at each school.

Question: If all of these practices are happening in different ways and on different levels, how do you measure what success is?

Nedra: Well, COFI in particular focuses on training parents, so we aren't putting them in charge of changing the culture or administration, they need to be seen as one part of a greater set of initiatives around restorative justice and violence reduction that this committee is looking at.

Question: How do we measure qualitative data like this? So how do we measure success and sustainability? Would it be better to focus on one of these metrics and figure out how to quantify that?

Tracy: We're hoping to build the infrastructure and provide the resources necessary to get this programming implemented, but it's really up to the individual school on how sustainability will look.

Data findings are reviewed, highlighting how Greater Chatham elementary schools have disproportionately high suspension and mobility rates when compared to those for Chicago as a whole. Twelve schools were then selected based on these metrics, with those with the highest percentages being singled out. These schools are Ashe, Avalon Park, Barton, Dixon, Dulles, Gresham, Jackson M, Joplin, Oglesby, Park Manor, Revere, and Tanner. The schools selected all appear on the borders of Greater Chatham, indicating that the perimeters need the most help, while the center is relatively stable.

The Committee recommends going forward with the proposal as submitted in preparation of getting a planning grant, with the caveat that COFI looks into higher performing schools as well as the selected twelve so that they have a source of comparison.

### Thrive Zone

In looking at the goals and strategies for GCI in “The Framework for the Path Forward”, the Youth and Support Services Committee is focused on initiatives related to education, health and other support services, and increased digital connectivity. One initiative currently underway is Retail Thrive, in which “thrive zones” have been identified, and grants have been allocated so that businesses in these designated areas can receive extra support. One Thrive Zone in particular, the retail strip of 79<sup>th</sup> Street between Vernon and St. Lawrence, has been championed as a future Kid Zone, or kid friendly area with stores that cater specifically to families with children. In this area, it is proposed that we have an interim library while Whitney Young undergoes renovation, a dog park or park for young children, childcare centers, and full service restaurants. Money will be made available for remodeling storefronts, as well as new construction, and a survey will be put out to see what types of businesses community members would like to see in the area.

The meeting is called to a close at 12:05 pm.