

## Whole Child Task Force

Wednesday, November 10, 2021

2-3 p.m.

<https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#/s/6ba776a84d0df0d1f4386e25591a802cd839ca6e8fea814d26430eba5d869e72>

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### Whole Child Task Force members present:

- Kristine Argue-Mason, *Partnership for Resilience*
- Dr. Terri Bresnahan, *Elk Grove School District 59*
- Chris Bridges, *Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights*
- Maryam Brotine, *Illinois Association of School Boards (arrived at*
- Dr. Colleen Cicchetti, *Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago*
- Dr. Lori James-Gross, *Unity Point School District 140*
- Dr. Jody Lack, *Southern Illinois University School of Medicine*
- Victoria Mikos, *Schaumburg Consolidated School District 54*
- Krish Mohip, *Illinois State Board of Education*
- Dr. Tiffany Nelson, *Illinois Association of School Social Workers*
- Lauren Pett, *Chicago Public Schools*
- Dr. Kennedy Strickland-Dixon, *Oak Park River Forest High School*
- Ann Whalen, *Advance Illinois*

### Whole Child Task Force members absent:

- Karyn Aguirre, *Chicago Public Schools*
- Bessie Alcantara, *Alternatives Inc.*
- Sheila Ashby, *Kaskaskia Special Education 801*
- Avery Bourne, *State Representative, 95<sup>th</sup> District*
- Dr. Maria Del Carmen Robles Sinkule, *Illinois Association of School Social Workers*
- Sandy De Leon, *City Colleges of Chicago*
- Dale Fowler, *State Senator, 59<sup>th</sup> District*
- Maria Gandara, *Chicago Public Schools*
- America Gutierrez, *Student Advisory Council*
- Jaime Guzman, *Illinois State Board of Education*
- Dr. Colandra Hamilton, *Midlothian School District 143*
- Kimberly Dr. Shaniqua Jones, *Thornton Chicago Public Schools Township High School District 205*
- Lightford, *State Senator, 4<sup>th</sup> District*
- Rita Mayfield, *State Representative, 60<sup>th</sup> District*
- Barbara Outten, *East St. Louis School District 189*
- Courtney Pharms-Marks, *Bloomington School District 87*
- Alisa Seo-Lee, *Chicago Public Schools*
- Jocelyn Vega, *Illinois Collaboration on Youth*

### ISBE Staff present:

- Krish Mohip, *Deputy Operational Education Officer*
- Cara Wiley, *Director for Wellness Department*
- Athanasia Albans, *Assistant to Deputy Operational Education Officer*

I. Welcome/Roll Call

Mr. Mohip brought the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was not present.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. October 28, 2021

Due to not having quorum, there was no vote to approve the meeting minutes.

III. Exemplar programs:

- a. Maria Degillo, Coordinator at Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE) and youth director at Communities United, stated that VOYCE is a statewide youth-led alliance. A purpose of the organization is to not only end the school-to-prison pipeline, but also to create healthier more equitable learning environments in the schools. She further described how COVID-19 has impacted their work, but also explained how VOYCE is engaged in many projects -- one being Whole School Safety. She stated that Whole School Safety is an effort between Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and five nonprofit organizations, including VOYCE.

Ms. Degillo provided a presentation explaining the background on Whole School Safety and the police notification process. She said that part of police notification was explaining its meaning, the role of police in schools, and the police notification data collected from all Chicago public high schools.

Ms. Degillo stated that the data showed that in 2015, 93% of the police notifications were for Black and Latinx students; in 2020, it was with 89%. She asked the question that, while the percentage decreased, what does that mean?

Additionally, Ms. Degillo shared data that was organized by race and gender along with reflection data gathered by stakeholders.

Ms. Degillo then explained how the data was shared with the community and the seven recommendations put forth through this initiative.

1. Implement holistic restorative practices.
2. Increase access to social-emotional learning and mental health resources.
3. Create safe and welcoming physical school environments.

4. Increase investments in student leadership and decision-making processes.
5. Increase authentic parent and community engagement opportunities.
6. Provide additional school-level support for trauma-informed crisis interventions.
7. Promote and enhance behavior health teams.

Ms. Degillo stated that from there the local councils in each school were asked to have community meetings in their schools to talk about what safety means for them; guidance was provided by VOYCE. Through those conversations, each school was able to discuss its priorities and vote to either keep one, both, or remove their school resource officers (SRO) from their school. She continued by stating that this was significant because it was a youth- and family-led process that required stakeholders to speak about safety after the start of the pandemic and the racial uprising. As a result, there were 20 schools that kept both police officers/school resource officers in their schools, 23 schools that kept one police officer/school resource officer, and 10 schools that removed both; therefore, this resulted in a lot of policy changes and deep and engaging conversations for families, young people, and the school regarding school safety.

Mr. Mohip asked about the communities that chose to keep their SROs in their buildings: Was their data collected to provide the racial breakdown of the demographics of the schools to show where the police offices still were and where they were not? He added that after taking a cursory look at the data in the presentation, there were some selective enrollment high schools and some schools on the north side that chose not to have SROs, whereas, there were two police officers in the south and southwest schools. He asked Ms. Degillo to provide any context to how those decisions were made.

Ms. Degillo responded that when speaking about safety, we must speak about the reality that there are many racial inequities, such as lack of resources and lack of access to resources, in different types of neighborhoods. She stated that the organization created a map that identifies the schools based on their school network in CPS. The next phase of Whole School Safety is to document this incredibly rich process by identifying the gaps and continue to work with the schools that voted to keep or remove the SRO while discussing what safety means to them.

Dr. Cicchetti stated that she really wanted this work to come forward because it highlights both the specifics of what has been accomplished in CPS and what the Whole Child Task Force is trying to accomplish. We can utilize VOYCE to think about how we

can support the schools that made these decisions. She added that to Mr. Mohip's point, those of us who spent a lot of time together looking at all of this data heard a lot of feedback. There was real variability. There were schools that really let the community guide the discussion and others where principals were less willing to be open to this; yet, there has been movement, even still.

Dr. Cicchetti shared that one of the things that we're trying to do in partnership with the Office of Safety and Security and in the Office of Social Emotional Learning is to offer supports to those teams in the schools that want to really think about how to build this culture shift. She said the rethinking of a safety concept and construct of kids feeling safe when they have resources and supports was one reason she wanted VOYCE to come. They can help us think through that while also thinking about what the whole child approaches mean. Secondly, what VOYCE has been able to do in partnership with these other groups has really elevated what community and youth engagement really means.

Dr. Cicchetti stated that one of her hopes from this task force is to avoid in-name-only youth engagement, but rather make recommendations that -- whatever issues a school is struggling with -- the community and youth engagement work is powerful and real. She asked that Ms. Degillo speak more broadly about how VOYCE does that and how it makes sure it's centered by youth voices because that will generalize to some of the task force recommendations.

Ms. Degillo stated that there are different meanings to youth engagement. A level of youth engagement is where you do all the work and get feedback. Then, there is youth-led, which is what VOYCE is. When an issue arises, it's those young people with those lived experiences who are breaking down the problems they are confronted with and develop and implement solutions they find that address that issue at its root cause. In order for VOYCE to do that, it must be led by youths. She stated that the organization developed values for what it means to engage young people in these deep discussions, especially in this virtual platform due to COVID-19. She explained that an example of value is to have the right youth/adult ratio. Meaning, having one adult for every four young people so as to address the power dynamics in the room and promote youth leadership.

Ms. Degillo stated that she would have wanted to have some of the young people of VOYCE be a part of this presentation today so that they can speak about the impact of being part of Whole School Safety. She shared how the initial conversation of Whole School Safety began with a young male, Caleb. He was lost to gun violence this past August, yet many youths were inspired by his passion and did this work on behalf of his legacy. She is asking the question, how do we continue the conversations while recognizing that the reality of the world that our young people live in? She stated that we have to be very intentional on those values.

Dr. Cicchetti stated that VOYCE has done a lot of work. There are not many groups in the state that have really thought about what that looks like and what that means. It would be nice as we are thinking about recommendations for schools, what would a healing-centered school look like in terms of youth and community engagement? Having information from VOYCE would be helpful to build into that designation and the trainings that we're doing.

Mr. Mohip asked that going back to the chart, as the schools decided to remove some SROs -- whether it was one or both -- did they replace that with additional counselors, social workers, or any support? In doing so, what were the outcome of those SROs being removed? Did they see an increase in fights? Did we see an increase of 911 calls? What was learned from that experience?

Ms. Degillo responded that the organization is in the process of documenting these issues. She stated that what made the process legitimate what that is was youth- and community-led and that it was supported by the school district. Whether a district removed one SRO, both SROs, or kept both, the money that was being spent on the SRO was still given to the school. She stated that using the seven recommendations stated earlier, schools were empowered to choose which recommendation strand to put that money into to best support their school and students. She then provided an example and further explained the change process the school went through regarding a school safety plan.

Dr. Cicchetti shared that this process is ongoing. This school year has been particular unusual; therefore, it is so critical to bring in the youth voice or the community engagement while also keeping an ongoing relationship with the schools. It's a sounding

board to have these conversations because these questions are coming up. She elaborated on the change process and why these conversations are so critical.

Ms. Degillo stated that this is only the beginning of the whole school safety process. What was shared today happened in less than a year, so imagine what could be done with more years. Additionally, she shared that VOYCE is receiving calls from school districts from across the country regarding the approach VOYCE took because it was so different from the way policy usually is set. She stated that this process was about the people with the lived experience and if anyone was deciding, it's the young people who have to deal with those consequences; therefore, they need to be a part of the decision-making process.

Ms. Degillo stated the legacy of Caleb, the young black man who lost his life to violence, was the reason why the Whole School Safety Task Force was created. She ended by asking the Whole Child Task Force to consider the wisdom that young people have to bring forward and encourage them to continue with their work.

- b. Bridget Gavaghan, director of Illinois ACEs Response Collaborative at Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, stated that the organization is a policy and research think tank and advocacy organization focused on health equity issues. Health and Medicine created the Illinois ACEs Response Collaborative in 2011 because the founders understood and saw all the emerging research around the impact that adverse childhood experiences and other potentially traumatic experiences in childhood can have on health and well-being over the course of a life; therefore, they wanted to address this through a public health approach. Ms. Gavaghan shared the mission and vision of the organization. In addition, she explained the policy and advocacy work over the last year and a half and how the organization has developed partnerships to build capacity with other organizations.

Ms. Gavaghan explained the policy piece. She stated that in 2019, in partnership with one of the collaborative members, Health and Medicine worked with policymakers to designate the first-ever Trauma-Informed Awareness Day in Illinois. The language of that resolution was a call to action for the organization. She elaborated by stating that the policymakers who endorsed this believed that they did not only want to be educated about this issue but really wanted to think through how to integrate what is known

about trauma, being trauma-informed, and healing-centered into everyday work. What that would look like for Illinois? She stated that in 2021, the organization modified the resolution to be more intentional and to think about the impact of racism, the need for intentionality around racial justice and equity, while recognizing that there is no such thing as being trauma-informed if you are not confronting historical and contemporary racism. She stated that that brought the organization back to the original resolution and forced it to think about it as a call to action of moving from awareness to implementation. She continued by stating that in July of 2020, the organization convened a statewide working group to address childhood adversity in Illinois. This working group, which was made up of representatives from around the state. Hospitals, schools, academia, community-based organizations, after-school programs, and parent leaders were asking questions, such as what would it mean to be a trauma-informed state? What are some of the strategic priorities we should emphasize? How do we envision healing across Illinois today?

Ms. Gavaghan explained that this process had four key steps that led to the development and release of the action plan. She explained those steps:

- Conducted a national scan to see what other states were doing regarding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) legislation and trauma legislation and what can be learned from them.
- Met with the full working group four times over the course of 10 months.
- In between that time, surveyed the working groups to identify the high-level priorities and begin drilling down specific action steps that should be part of the plan by convened smaller committees around the specific five areas identified as priority areas
- Conducted focus groups with the parent leaders who are participating in the statewide working group. This process was in partnership with an organization called Community Organizing and Family Issues.

This all culminated in the release of the action plan to address childhood adversity. This coincided with Trauma-Informed Awareness Day on May 25, 2021.

Ms. Gavaghan identified and explained the five planks of the plan:

Plank 1: Emphasize trauma-informed policymaking.

Plank 2: Improve state-level coordination.

Plank 3: Build awareness and education.

Plank 4: Improve data collection and accessibility.

Plank 5: Identify trauma-informed practice metrics.

Ms. Gavaghan stated that for each of these planks, overarching strategies and specific action items were identified. The big takeaway was that this was not the Illinois ACEs Response Collaborators' nor the Health and Medicines' action plan but rather a shared responsibility.

Ms. Gavaghan explained the next steps to the action plan was to convene subgroups for each plank, partner with the Illinois Department of Public Health on the data; map and track aligned activities and initiatives; and communicate the process, opportunities, and/or barriers.

Dr. Cicchetti thank Ms. Gavaghan for attending. She stated that it was important for the Whole Child Task Force to see some common themes that have emerged in the work of VOYCE and ACEs that is also highlighted in the work that is happening on the Whole Child Task Force. She hopes that task force members will begin thinking about recommendations that can be across the entire state and across different child-serving entities.

Mr. Mohip thanked both Ms. Degillo and Ms. Gavaghan for sharing their expertise and experiences with the Whole Child Task force.

IV. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

V. New Business

There was no new business.

VI. Adjourn

Mr. Mohip ended the meeting ended at 2:25 p.m.

Dates, times, and locations are subject to change at the direction of the chair. Please check

[www.isbe.net/wholechild](http://www.isbe.net/wholechild) for official meeting postings