

New York CAN  
Notes from the Meeting  
February 9, 2007

Friday's conversation, in addition to the unprecedented meet and greet session with the Governor the day the budget was released, signals to all of us how important he and his staff view issues of concern impacting children and their families. We came away with the realization that indeed much has changed with this new administration and with a respect for the challenges they face.

Our guests at the meeting included Dennis Whalen, Deputy Secretary to the Governor for Health & Human Services; Joseph Baker, Assistant Deputy Secretary to the Governor for Health & Human Services; Kristin Proud, Director for Health & Human Services; and Kim Fine, Deputy Budget Director. All four guests were very open to suggestions, ideas, and concerns and want to hear from us both now and in the future. If you are interested in setting up an appointment with the Governor's second floor staff, they can be reached at 518-408-2500.

Some key points:

1. This administration inherited many post dated checks that are now coming due. This has impacted what they can achieve with this first year budget. It is important to understand that the budget starts down a path and more will be coming in future years. We ask that children's advocates support this budget even if their specific issue did not receive funding at the hoped for or needed level.

The Governor's staff recognizes that this budget is not perfect but it does point to change. Some powerful interests will be opposed to this budget. If they succeed in getting the changes they desire and the Governor does not get what he has proposed in this budget it will change what he hopes to do in future years.

2. Olivia Golden, Director of State Operations, starts her position February 12th. Part of her job will be to bring the Governor's staff together as a team and build initiatives together. Such efforts will be important if they are to be successful in breaking down silos and addressing problems more comprehensively. A critical component of all the conversations with prospective commissioners had to do with breaking down silos. They are interested in looking at deploying resources in a more effective way.

As a start, they encourage:

- collaborative proposals from local communities in response to RFPs.
- hearing from advocates about ideas for a Children's Cabinet and the role of the Council for Children and Families.
- hearing from advocates about consumer representation - when and where such representation might be appropriate or needed.

3. Some general themes emerged for New York CAN work:

- a) Child advocates need to work to protect areas of the budget where gains were made.
- b) Three issues cross all areas of service and needs for children and should be the focus of New York CAN's work:

- 1) family supports across silos
- 2) workforce issues
- 3) access to services: including transportation, cultural competence, and rural versus urban considerations.

c) Each New York CAN committee came away from the meeting with a list of budget areas to consider in their meetings. Each committee should also address the three issues mentioned above.

4. Those interested in working on developing an approach for and marketing a Children's Budget should reply to this email with your interest.

5. The Steering Committee will meet and discuss Federal legislation and a possible role for New York CAN. Many important funding streams are up for reauthorization at the federal level this year. Issue area committees will also be asked to address this legislation and a response to it from New York CAN.

6. The group decided they would like to come together three times over the next year, once during the summer for a meeting with Commissioners to discuss interagency issues, another in the early fall with the Governor's staff to discuss issues pre budget, and the third in February with the Governor's staff to discuss post budget issues.