

## Summary of Conference Call

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
Advisory Committee on Family Residential Centers  
Subcommittee on Education  
April 26, 2016

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Advisory Committee on Family Residential Centers (ACFRC), Subcommittee on Education convened for its weekly meeting on Tuesday, April 26, 2016, via teleconference from 12:00 P.M. to 1:00 P.M. The purpose of the meeting was for subcommittee members to discuss potential topics and how to organize those issues.

### **Attendance:**

#### *Subcommittee Members Present for the Teleconference:*

- BethAnn Berliner
- Anadora Moss
- Michelle Brané

#### *Others Present:*

- John Amaya, Deputy Chief of Staff, ICE; Designated Federal Officer (DFO), ACFRC
- Andrea Washington, Special Assistant, ICE

### **Opening Remarks:**

Subcommittee Chair BethAnn Berliner performed the roll call and thanked everyone for calling in.

### **General Meeting:**

Chair Berliner began the discussion by stating that her goal for the meeting was for everyone to walk away with clarity about how to start organizing the issues the subcommittee wants to address. She said the two big pieces confronting the subcommittee are the timeline for generating the list of issues they believe are the high-priority topics and then crafting persuasive, actionable recommendations that make good sense based upon research and best practices.

Referencing the subcommittee Chairs call earlier in the day, Chair Berliner noted that Jennifer Nagda, Chair of the Subcommittee on Access to Counsel and Language Services, created a table that could be used as another tool to organize the group's thinking. Chair Berliner sent the table to members a few minutes prior to the call.

The Chair then opened the floor to members, asking if they had a chance to review the example advisory committee reports she emailed the previous week and/or read through Chair Orloff's compiled document.

Vice Chair Anadora Moss and Michelle Brané both confirmed that they had a chance to review the materials. Ms. Brané said she noticed that the reports essentially fell into two categories: a bulleted approach with very simple instructions and a narrative approach that included a lot of explanation and background on the thinking behind the recommendations. She said she believes the Committee could do a combination of the two.

Vice Chair Moss agreed with Ms. Brané's assessment, adding that she thought some were visually clearer than others. She said she was leaning more toward the narrative approach where there is room for a little bit more information.

Chair Berliner said she noticed that some of the examples had very concrete finding statements. The finding was based on evidence, which she acknowledged could look different in the Committee's case, given the various levels of information and evidence currently available. She reiterated, though, that the various levels of available information should not stop the subcommittee from making recommendations based on their expertise and known best practices, which ICE staff continues to be supportive of.

Vice Chair Moss asked if the availability of information (or lack thereof) can be identified as an area of concern, and Chair Berliner said that it could be.

Ms. Brané said there is a lot of information that has been requested that would be very directly relevant to the subcommittee's work, and she believes members could make recommendations that are more specific, direct, and helpful if they had more details on the current educational tools, training, handbooks, etc. Ms. Brané said without this information the subcommittee runs the risk of providing recommendations for things that are already being done and/or making recommendations that are not beneficial because they do not have a full picture. She asked ACFRC DFO John Amaya if he could inform the subcommittee about the likelihood of receiving this information and about any potential timeline ICE has for supplying it.

DFO Amaya responded that there is no exact timeframe for providing information, and he said the preference is for requests for information to come in as subcommittees identify the need. Requests will be processed as they are received.

Chair Berliner, noting the tight timeline for confirming topics and drafting the actual recommendations, outlined a broad schedule for moving forward. She said in order for the subcommittee to meet the end of June deadline for drafts, members have to start the writing process in late May or early June, giving everyone between now and mid-May to organize issues and amass the information necessary to do their work.

The Chair then stated that it was clear from the subcommittee Chairs call that all of the groups are in the same boat of feeling like they have very limited information on a number of topics. She said she personally feels like the subcommittee will make another request for information because she is not convinced of what evidence or practice looks like. Without observing classroom practices, interviewing teachers, or reviewing curriculum materials, key issues remain big open questions, Chair Berliner said.

Moving the conversation to strategizing about how to chart out recommendations, Chair Berliner asked subcommittee members to open the document containing the table created by Chair Nagda so they could review it together and see if it would be a helpful tool as is or in a modified version. Members walked through the topic of adult education and its potential subparts to create an example of how the table could be used to organize their issues.

Following the exercise, Chair Berliner asked if the process is something that would work for everyone. Vice Chair Moss and Ms. Brané agreed that it worked for them.

Chair Berliner proposed removing a column that suggests recommendations cannot be made due to lack of information or evidence, given that ICE has already provided the go ahead for subcommittee members to use their expertise and knowledge of best practices to make recommendations in those cases. She then called out topics that she believes fit in the main issues category, mainly drawing from a starter list of topics she put together after the last meeting. Those topics included:

1. Adult/Parent education;
2. Curriculum;
3. Emotional learning;
4. Trauma-informed practices;
5. Education records; and
6. Staff education

Vice Chair Moss said she thinks safety and reporting abuse are important issues that should also be addressed. Ms. Brané agreed, and Chair Berliner said it was a great issue to cover because it weaves together education and the detention management piece. Ms. Brané added that the subparts of the issue could include abuse both within the family and outside of the family unit.

Ms. Brané continued that the subcommittee could also look at how increased stress and tension within the family can lead to depression, which could lead to either emotional or physical abuse, intended and not. She stated this could be incorporated under the umbrellas of parent education or abuse complaints.

Based on the conversation, Chair Berliner said the subcommittee could create a version of Chair Nagda's chart that worked for their needs. She said she would take the first pass at inputting information and share the updated document with the group.

The group then discussed making further changes to denote the nuances involved in framing the recommendations, chiefly clearly stating which recommendations were made based on provided information and which were based on expertise, but could have been stronger if more information had been provided.

Chair Berliner asked subcommittee members to provide their thoughts about the level of granularity they believe should be reflected in the recommendations. She wanted to know if they thought recommendations should be made in a holistic manner or in a very specific way.

Ms. Brané answered that based on her experience making recommendations, she thinks recommendations should be as specific and granular as possible because it is easy for an agency to take a broad idea and get it wrong in the implementation. Vice Chair Moss concurred, noting that she thought some of the example recommendations were too broad.

The Vice Chair followed up by asking if “smart skills” was a term of art in the education field. She mentioned that the idea was brought up during the previous call when the group was discussing the kinds of information mothers need to know when they are in the residential center and when they move to their new community.

Chair Berliner said different terms—life skills, core competencies—were used in the education field, but the idea is the same. Ms. Brané said this would be a good category to add to the subcommittee’s list of topics.

Chair Berliner said the subcommittee could have another bucket of issues that is focused on educating the mothers on things like English language acquisition and basic literacy training. She stated that in a short amount of time, a literacy rich environment for mothers and children would focus on listening and speaking with a secondary focus on reading and writing in English. Acknowledging that many of the mothers may not have reading and writing skills, Chair Berliner said it is more important to create an environment fertile in the pre-literacy skills of listening and speaking.

On the issue of detention management, Ms. Brané asked if the subcommittee planned to tackle the topic after it works through all of the pieces related to education. She reminded the group that it was decided at the full Committee public meeting on March 16 that all of the subcommittees would take a look at detention management.

Vice Chair Moss said that it was her understanding that everyone would be looking through the lens of detention management in all of their recommendations. She stated that she sees it as two prongs: one is recommendations that fit the setting, and the other is recommendations that drive operational changes to support their implementation.

Ms. Brané raised the issue of how far the lens should go, stating that detention management could go as broad as questioning who is at the residential centers in the first place. Vice Chair Moss said there should be some scope around it, and Chair Berliner said she thought the scope was how it pertains to education.

Ms. Brané then expressed concern about the broader issue of detention management potentially being dropped because it is not clearly in any of the three subcommittees, and it is an important issue to address. Vice Chair Moss said ICE should provide clarification, adding that if members do not specifically look at the issue, detention management might not be fully covered.

DFO Amaya said the driving force behind the decision to have all subcommittees look at detention management was to, at bottom, address the issue from each of the various views and perspectives. Ms. Brané said this leaves her wondering about the larger issue because it is bigger than the focus areas of the three subcommittees. She thinks ICE and the Department of

Homeland Security might miss out on critical recommendations that affect family detention holistically.

Chair Berliner said her takeaway was that there was room for the subcommittee to make recommendations related to detention management to the extent that it makes sense. DFO Amaya concurred, and he added that breaking up detention management across the subcommittees was in no way an attempt to discourage members from really diving into detention management holistically.

Chair Berliner stated that she appreciated the explanation, but said it seemed that an impediment to reviewing the detention management aspect was put in place by the parameters of the three specified subcommittees. She suggested that there needs to be some additional attention paid to the topic in a cross-cutting way. She said perhaps each of the subcommittees could generate recommendations.

Ms. Brané said she was thinking along the same lines. She suggested that it might make sense for each subcommittee to focus on the specific issues they are supposed to tackle, and then come up with detention management suggestions. Those suggestions could be circulated at the subcommittee Chairs level to ensure there is no overlap.

Wrapping up the meeting, Chair Berliner reminded members that she would handle refining the topics chart and sending it out to the team by next week. She said she is also going to work on putting dates to deadlines, but again stated that the general timeline is to solidify topics in the next few weeks, craft recommendations in June, and have recommendations drafted and ready for review by mid-June.

Chair Berliner asked everyone to share any helpful go-to documents on how to think about education. She said it could be useful to have these documents on hand as the subcommittee continues thinking through ideas.

With no further issues to discuss, Chair Berliner adjourned the meeting.

**Adjournment:**

The subcommittee adjourned at 1:00 P.M.