AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILD AND FAMILY WELL BEING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Council Meeting Minutes - March 25, 2026

Present: J. Blakey, L. Lewis, J. Cannon, M. Doward, S. Brown, T. Russell, S. Hall, K. Kamara, K. Porter, K. Caston, S. Washington, S. Kabalan, L. Coleman, A. Lamb-Onayiga, P. Fritz,

Absent: A. Hill, H. Yusuf, N. Lenoir-Johnson, K. Holliday, C. Fleming, A. Goff, L. Davis, L. Muhammad, P. Frye

DCYF Staff: S. McPherson

Guest: D. Gilchrist

The March 25, 2026, AACFWBAC meeting focused on a comprehensive update from the African American & African Heritage Well-Being Unit, followed by key Council business. Devin Gilchrist presented the history, purpose, and current work of the unit, emphasizing its creation in response to longstanding disparities affecting African American children in Minnesota's child welfare system. He described how the unit has expanded since 2020, especially after MAAFPA/CWDA passed in 2024, and outlined its core functions: improving policy and practice, conducting targeted case reviews, strengthening prevention and family preservation, and using data to drive systemic change. Devon highlighted recent trends, including decreases in new placements and foster care reentry, alongside persistent disparities in screening decisions that continue to require focused attention.

The Council also received updates on upcoming workgroups, practice guide revisions, and the development of the unit's engagement site, which will support collaboration and transparency. Following the presentation, members discussed data interpretation, the limits of current dashboards, and the importance of pairing quantitative trends with lived experience.

Council business included planning for the March 31 Family Night event with Hennepin County, welcoming new members, reminders about invoicing and Teams access, and an initial discussion of the Council's mission and vision statements. Work on Council norms and rules was postponed to the next meeting due to time. The meeting closed with a reminder of the Council's growing role as MAAFPA/CWDA implementation expands statewide.