

MACCAN MEETING NOTES

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect (MACCAN)

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Microsoft Teams

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order shortly after 10:00 a.m.

2. Attendance / Member & Guest Check-In

Introductions were completed after the CFSA representative's departure.

Members and guests present included:

- **Cheryl Boyce**, Chair
- **Keeley Magyar**, OAG – Family Services Division
- **Aisha Braithwaite Blucher**, Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS)
- **Magistrate Judge Julie Breslow**, DC Superior Court
- **Dr. Erica Peterson**, DC Health – Early Childhood Health
- **Dr. Edgar Stewart**, OSSE
- **Dr. Deatre Bryant Mallory**, DCPS – Student Supports
- **Howard University student observer:** Beverly Robertson
- Several other agency representatives as silent observers

A quorum was established.

3. Ascertainment of Quorum

A quorum was confirmed.

4. Report by the Chair of MACCAN

Membership Update – Vacancies

Ongoing and significant vacancies remain in:

- Advocacy organizations
- Public / community member seats

Chair Boyce expressed concerns about:

- Longstanding recruitment stalls with the **Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments (MOTA)**
- Interested candidates experiencing long delays and no follow-up
- The Chair being the **only non-governmental member**, despite the Mayor's Order requiring balanced representation
- The resulting strain on MACCAN's mission, especially community engagement and public voice

Committee Function and Engagement

- MACCAN has struggled to sustain momentum due to limited membership.
- The committee wishes to build stronger connections with **CFSA leadership** throughout the year, not only during the annual report period.

5. Discussion – MACCAN Refresh Dialogue

Agenda Prompt: *"Agree or disagree: MACCAN needs a reset."*

All members **agreed**.

5.1 What makes members feel MACCAN needs a reset?

- Low membership and persistent vacancies
- Lack of consistent community voice or lived experience input
- Limited attendance by CFSA leadership (largely due to scheduling conflicts)
- Reduced clarity of role and mission
- Difficulty executing activities like town halls with a small member base
- Need to modernize and refresh MACCAN's purpose

5.2 Barriers preventing MACCAN from functioning with clarity and purpose

- **MOTA delays** create structural barriers that MACCAN cannot control
- Meeting timing (Tuesday morning) makes community participation hard

- Limited stakeholder sectors represented:
 - Teachers
 - Behavioral health providers
 - Foster parent associations
 - Community advocates and youth
- Need ongoing data from CFSA (Success Centers, metrics, updates)
- Leadership transitions within CFSA and broader District government

5.3 One Small Realistic Step Forward

Members committed to:

- **Each member invites at least ONE new potential community member** to the August meeting
 - Participation is allowed even before official appointment
- Setting a **clear issue focus for the next meeting**
- Adjusting meeting times to improve community access
- Increasing structured communication with CFSA leadership
- Rebuilding bridges with DBH, OSSE, DCPS, and others

Key Discussion: Chronic Absenteeism – Judge Breslow

Magistrate Judge Julie Breslow presented an in-depth overview of chronic absenteeism and educational neglect cases. She emphasized that these matters are among the **most challenging cases** the Court encounters, often involving **younger children** rather than adolescents refusing to attend school.

Key points included:

- In many cases, **CFSA has already worked with families for one to two years** prior to court involvement, reflecting substantial pre-court intervention.
- Parents often provide **no clear explanation** for absences or cite **vague safety concerns**.
- Parental **mental health issues or substance use** frequently contribute.
- While **foster care is not intended as an absenteeism solution**, removal may be necessary when:
 - A child has missed **100–150 school days per year**, and

- All other interventions have been exhausted.
 - Temporary foster care may support consistent school attendance before reunification.
 - **Truancy filings are no longer widely used** in DC; most are now routed through diversion programs.
 - Judge Breslow stressed the urgent need for a **coordinated system-wide approach** due to significant implications for child safety, well-being, and long-term outcomes.
 - MACCAN will focus the August 2026 meeting on this issue
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SPECIAL INSERT: Remarks from Dr. Brandy Nicole Brooks

Deputy Director – Office of Policy, Planning & Program Support, CFSA

Dr. Brooks joined for the first portion of the meeting and provided detailed updates and commitments.

1. CFSA Leadership Engagement

- Director **Tanya Torres Trice** is committed to meeting with MACCAN.
- Requires **one-week advance notice** to schedule.
- Dr. Brooks will coordinate scheduling with Roni and the Director’s assistant, Anthony.
- CFSA will work toward more consistent direct engagement with the committee.

2. Success Centers Update & Follow-Up

MACCAN emphasized the need for:

- Success Center **metrics**, outcomes, and progress
- A clearer picture of their prevention role in high-report wards
- Opportunities to meet with Success Centers directly

Dr. Brooks committed to:

- Working with the **Office of Thriving Families** to compile this information
- Providing all available Success Center summaries to MACCAN
- Helping facilitate **Success Center representation** at future meetings
- Strengthening MACCAN–Success Center communication

3. Measurement Framework Overhaul

CFSA is shifting from the former **Four Pillars** to a new vision:
“Keeping DC Families Together.”

This includes:

- New agency-wide metrics
- Stakeholder-driven development

Dr. Brooks committed to:

- Ensuring MACCAN is invited to **all stakeholder convenings**
- Encouraging MACCAN to help shape new metrics
- Integrating MACCAN’s perspective on prevention and community impact

4. Recruitment Support from CFSA

Dr. Brooks acknowledged MACCAN’s membership crisis and committed CFSA to assisting:

- Raising recruitment needs during CFSA’s stakeholder convenings
- Broadcasting the need for **non-governmental members**
- Working with Roni to identify potential candidates
- Exploring outreach through CFSA’s **Lived Experience Advisory Council** for newly available members

5. Lived Experience & Community Engagement

- CFSA recognizes the value of lived experience and intends to reconnect individuals who have rotated off the Lived Experience Advisory Council.
- Dr. Brooks also agreed to explore **CFSA-supported recruitment strategies** to boost community voices.

6. Ongoing Participation

- Dr. Brooks apologized for limited time at this meeting.
- Expressed intent to attend more future meetings or send senior staff.
- Acknowledged the importance of MACCAN during a period of transition for the city.

6. Opportunity for Public Comment

Howard University student **Beverly Robertson** asked about:

- Early interventions to prevent chronic absenteeism cases from reaching court

- System coordination between schools, CFSA, and other agencies

Responses highlighted:

- CFSA's extensive pre-court interventions
 - The role of mental health and substance use challenges
 - Safety concerns that cause some parents to keep children home
 - Historical changes to DC truancy enforcement
 - The complexity and layered nature of school neglect cases
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7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned shortly after 11:15 a.m.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, August 25, 2026

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

(Time adjusted to improve participation.)

**Next Meeting:
Tuesday, August 25, 2026 1pm**

Questions/Comments? Please contact Roni Seabrook at (202) 724-7076
or roni.seabrook@dc.gov.

This meeting is governed by the Open Meetings Act. Please address any questions or complaints arising under this meeting to the Office of Open Government at opengovoffice@dc.gov.”