



Children's Cabinet

Minutes

March 30, 2017

Capitol Press Conference Room (4th Fl)

Member Attendees:

Deputy Secretary Dr. James Bueche Jr.
Judge Desiree-Cook-Calvin
Commissioner John Dardenne Jr.
Executive Director Ava Dejoie
Secretary Dr. Rebekah Gee
Executive Director Dr. Dana Hunter
Secretary Donald Pierson Jr.
Secretary Marketa Walters
State Superintendent John C. White

Call to Order & Roll Call

Executive Director, Dr. Dana Hunter, called the meeting to order at 3:00pm and opening comments were made by Deputy Chief of Staff, Johnny Anderson. He introduced the new Children's Cabinet Director, Dr. Dana Hunter and informed members and guests of her qualifying credentials.

The roll was called and afterwards Dr. Dana Hunter briefly spoke about the Governor and First Lady attending the National Governor's Association Conference which has resulting in them making child hunger a priority for Louisiana. Dr. Hunter then invited the Governor to come forth to speak on the issue.

Opening Remarks:

The Governor stated that one of the discussions at the National Governor's Association was child hunger and what other states are doing. He was concerned that Louisiana was not taking advantage of all the federal dollars available for our children. He discussed one program in Fairfax, Virginia and Share Our Strength, that's making sure the kids are having more access to nutritional foods. During the school day, they have a grab-n-go breakfast where the kids have a few minutes to eat in their first period class. Then on Fridays, the kids are sent home with a backpack full of food. During the summer, meals are provided to students on a regular basis by partnering with libraries and parks and they destigmatized the food because it is, for the most

part, available to any of their students. The program has made a tremendous difference in the children's health; and they are staying in school, paying attention and testing better. The Governor wants the Children's Cabinet to see what we are currently doing, what we should be taking advantage of to come up with strategies to reduce the number of hungry children. First Lady, Donna Edwards, reiterated the grab -n- go breakfast and stated that it would be great if it could be implemented in our schools.

Introduction of Child Hunger Initiative

Dr. Hunter presented a brief PowerPoint presentation by Share Our Strength, a national nonprofit on child hunger. Dr. Hunter reported that 1 in 5 American children do not get the food they need on a daily basis. In Louisiana, the USDA reported 272,760 kids suffer from child hunger. 24.5% of kids that are raised in families that struggle with hunger may be more likely to repeat a grade in schools, experience developmental impairment and have social and behavior problems. The USDA defines food security as having access all the time to enough food for an active healthy life. How food insecurity is measured? Between 1995-1997, the USDA collaborated with experts in food security. They developed a survey called US House of Food Security Scale (HFSS). It's administered annually to households with and without kids.

There have been Federal policies and programs launched to address this topic. Share Our Strength, a national non-profit that has addressed child hunger for years. In 2010, they launched a rigorous, no hunger campaign, with a mission to end child hunger in the USA. Federal policy makers, with the reorganization of the child nutrition programs, have authorized the healthy hunger for kids Act for 2010. This allowed provisions for any school in a high poverty area could accept and adopt the community eligibility provision which allows any child at that school to eat for free. School districts that have adopted this program saw child hunger reduced drastically. In 2010, Share Your Strength brought the program to Louisiana. They joined Mary Landrieu to launch the No Kid Hunger Campaign in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Dr. Hunter emphasized that this program is doable being that it has already started in Louisiana and they would like to expand it on a larger scale. Before the N.O. Campaign, 42% of eligible children received school breakfast. By 2013, they reached 70% of participation in breakfast. Community eligibility allows qualifying high poverty schools to offer breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge and without application. More than 14,000 high poverty schools in more than 2200 districts across the United States have adopted the program for the 2014-2015 school years.

In Louisiana, 2014-2015, 37% of our schools adopted community eligibility. In 2015-2016, 53% of eligible schools, which is 484 out of 919 had adopted the program. Dr. Hunter wants to work towards 100% participation of eligible school. With this program, kids are able to have breakfast in their classrooms, grab-n-go lunches for middle and high school. After school meals and summer feeding programs are paid for through the USDA and there are programs that provide weekend bag lunches.

The Governor would like to find ways to increase the number of local non-profits and state agencies that are able to administer the feeding programs and he would like to take advantage of the federal dollars that are available to solve this problem.

Discussion of Hunger initiative

The Governor questioned why some superintendents wouldn't want to participate in the program? Superintendent, John White, stated that it may be that adopting community eligibility provision, there is no longer that measure of having a certain number of kids who are eligible for free and reduce lunch. There are state allocated funding based on those measures; therefore you could be locking yourself out of the rates for the free and reduced counts.

The Governor would like to reduce any obstacles, have New Orleans come and share their experiences, see what's available, package it and see if we could sell it to the superintendents. He let the Cabinet know that if we have the ability to reduce kids from going to bed hungry every night than we have an obligation.

Other concerns presented by Superintendent White

- Breakfast: equipment and the ability to prepare food that can be refrigerated and operational issues.
- Rural communities: during the summer, kids are less likely to access feeding programs due to transportation issues.

Governor Edwards also informed Cabinet Members that with this program, those eligible can buy produce locally that is nutritional.

Superintendent White stated that they are about to enter into a farm to table agreement with the Department of Agriculture statewide.

DCFS Secretary, Marketa Walters, discussed the concern of foster parents who have kids that hide food in their room due to not having food security in the home they came from. She informed members that it takes a while to break that behavior and they have to educate the foster parents to allow the kids to behave in this manner until they feel safe.

Governor Edwards would like for there to be a meeting, with the right people, by the next Cabinet Meeting to come up with strategies to sell this program to more school districts.

Other Initiatives

- *DCFS Sec. Marketa Walters discussed the Wendy's Wonderful Kids and the Casey Family Programs*

Through assistance from the Governor, a foundation will assist with the Wendy's Wonderful Kids by investing to pay for a staff person in the Department of Family Services to recruit foster homes for 3 categories of hard to place children (large sibling groups, older children and

children with disabilities). There will be a recruiter, who will receive special training and materials, in every region with a supervisor.

The Casey Family Program is a large profit, non-profit dedicated to child welfare. They work with the foster care system in most states at some level but they have made a significant commitment to increase their work with Louisiana. They will assist with funding the Quality Parent Initiative which involves recruiting quality foster parents and helping to build support groups in each community that will support those foster parents.

- *First Lady Donna Edwards discussed Louisiana First Foundation & Update on Metanoia.* The Louisiana Foundation focuses on the foster care program, will receive assistance from the Casey Foundation and will be partnering with school district.

Metanoia is a home that is presently under construction with the ribbon ceremony scheduled for April 26, 2017. This home will house 16 girls under the age of 21 who have been rescued from human trafficking. A PowerPoint was presented which stated that according to national data, the worst areas for human trafficking are between Houston Texas and New Orleans, La.

- *DCFS Dept. Sec. Terri Ricks discussed Flood Recovery Child Task Forces-update* Ms. Ricks stated that Governor Edwards signed an Executive Order that made Louisiana the first state in the nation to use the National Disaster Recovery Framework. It is to organize our recovery in the state (lead by locals) and the following information was concluded:

1. Health and Social Services is a recovery service with the primary agencies being La. Dept. of Health, Dept. of Children and Family Services and Dept. of Education.
2. The National Disaster Recovery Framework requires a mission scope assessment which is a federal document collaborated with the federal government, in which, they came up with three major issues:
 - a) Children and families during a disaster having access to childcare, transportation, child abuse, disruptions to foster and adoption due to people not having a home, Increase in family violence, food insecurity
 - b) Protecting seniors and children with disabilities
 - c) Behavior health

Ms. Ricks stated that their partners from Health and Human Services (HHS) on the federal level were at their RSF3 meeting along with the invited 57 parishes on February 22, 2017. HHS had an idea to make children and youth task forces in parishes that wanted it and they would ask FEMA to provide the resources and planning to the parishes with the emphasis of recovery on the health and service side. Any feedback concerning the children's task force would be considered in its final form.

Dr. Hunter open the floor for members to discuss other initiatives

Member discussed the concerns of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) program being in jeopardy due to over a million dollar cut last year (which will also affect the Independent living program). In LSR Legislation they were authorized to set aside for pre-employment transitional services with a focus on putting young people back to work through the Louisiana Workforce Commission. She encouraged that the program be fully funded.

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings

A tentative bi-monthly meeting schedule was distributed. Dr. Hunter informed members that the finalized schedule would be e-mailed to them.

Other Business

No other business

Adjournment