



Children's Cabinet Advisory Board Meeting

Minutes

East Baton Rouge Parish Library

10.17.16

Attendees:

Members:

Gina Womack	Sarah Hinshaw
MarkThomas	James Sprinkle
Mary Scalco	Jennifer Karl
Cindy Bishop	Sherry Guarisco
Jen Steele	Eric Griggs
James Hussey	Gina Eubanks
Paul Carlsen	Davondra Brown
Juanita Washington	Ivy Starns
Marsha Shuler	Carmen Weisner
Reshonn Saul	Kahree Wahid
Kelly Pepper	Dana Hunter
Beth Scalco	Kathleen Richey

Non-Members:

Amanda Cloyd	Varnia Armstrong
Shane Riddle	Darin Harris
Valerie Laday	Rick Wheat
Melanie Brofin	Sandra Adams
Bambi Polozola	Karen Powell
Stephanie Sterling	Donald Songy
G. Grover	Bria Dukes
Deborah Meaux	John Newman
Rachel Gassert	Stephen Kauffman
Connie Bellone	Erin Bendily
Andrew G.	Richard Pittman

Executive Director's Report:

Dr. James Gilmore opened up the meeting with introductions from members and stakeholders before sharing important dates with everyone.

- 10/19/16 JJIC meeting @ 9:00am-10:30am in House Committee Room 5. The Chair is Rep. Katrina Jackson.
- 10/31/16 Raise the Age Commission Meeting from 10:00am-12pm in Senate Room 5- responsible for implementation and monitoring.
- 11/1/16 Children's Cabinet Meeting from 10:00am-12:00pm @ the State Capitol Press Conference Room on the 4th Floor. All Cabinet Secretaries have confirmed attendance.

Dr. Gilmore updated members and stakeholders on the highlights of recent meetings and conferences.

Project Highlights:

- Attended several meetings related to the ESSA (Every Student Succeed Act), town hall meetings and other types of community forums. The NAACP had a forum in Houma, La.
- The Governor's Office has called for a Governor's ESSA Taskforce meeting for 10/20/16. Location and time will be emailed to attendees.
- DOE (Department of Education) – The Head Start Initiative has worked with the federal government to get an additional Head Start approved in Ouachita Parish. The Governor's Office provided a letter of support for this new center.
- Met with the (DOA) Division of Administration regarding the children's budget for this fiscal year. An overview of the proposed budget will be shared at the Children's Cabinet meeting on November 1, 2016. An analysis will be conducted of the children's budget over the past 5 years to take a closer look at the trend data
- Met with Advisory Board Member, Davondra Brown, regarding Premature Awareness Month that is coming up in November. Dr. Gilmore advised Board members to connect with Ms. Brown if they wanted to support this initiative sponsored by The March of Dimes.
- Met with Ms. Lynn Clark at the Children's Coalition in Monroe and had the opportunity to connect with planning board members in the area. The need to continue support of the "Darkness to Light" program, which is an evidence-based training program designed to prevent child abuse. The Governor's office has agreed to purchase 100 "Darkness to Light" training materials each year to support those who are certified to provide the training.
- Attended the Psychological Association of Louisiana's Annual Conference. One of the take-aways from the conference was the need for more community based psychology, using psychologists to respond to disasters and traumatic experiences within the respective communities. The question

becomes how we engage those within the Association so they can provide services to the citizens that need them the most.

- Participated in meetings related to opportunities for our communities and law enforcement to engage in relationship building. He also worked with leaders in Baton Rouge and across the state to ensure that we continue a dialogue and develop strategies to perpetuate positive momentum in the months to come.
- Continuing to work on flood response and assisting families in finding shelter and answering questions for citizens who need help navigating the rebuilding process.

Department of Education -Report on Suspensions and Expulsions:

Legislation was recently passed to establish a 24 member council for the purpose of reviewing, studying, and making any recommendations relative to student discipline and behavior; the formal name being the Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline. The Council membership includes individuals representing school systems, advocacy organizations, parents, and a number of different stake holders. The Council formally met weeks ago to address the charge provided to them by the legislature. In addition, members examined background information, as well as statewide data presented on suspensions and expulsions across Louisiana's public schools in comparison to the language in the new legislation. There are specific areas where the law requires certain actions to be taken when certain offenses are committed. There are areas where the school and respective leaders have discretion on how they address particular situations. The law requires the Council to meet three times per calendar year with the next two meetings being held on Dec. 2 and Dec. 9 in the Claiborne Building.

Handouts provided for Board members and stakeholders regarding all information and data covered in the first council meeting and in the corresponding news reports.

Overview of Louisiana Discipline Data:

Information gets reported by school districts across the state into the Department of Education. Pre-K thru 12th grade reports out by age or grade level, count of incidents, count of children, suspensions, and expulsions including in-school and out of schools suspensions and expulsions. This resulted in conversation within the group about the frequency of kids being suspended and expelled particularly in out of school settings. In past legislative sessions, there have been debates on the appropriate time to send a child home. If safety is not an issue, what action should be taken first by the teacher, principal, and/or others on campus to do everything to keep that child in a learning environment, using out of school discipline as a last resort? State data summaries show that the number of incidents includes roughly 115,000 out of school suspensions per year (8%) and 400 out of school expulsions per year (about .05%).

Conducting a landscape survey was the first exercise of the group, examining the extent to which our students are being suspended and expelled. The information filtered to the state department shows that districts have many reasons pre-programmed into the system as to the type of incident, such as, willful disobedience (which was the number one reason), exhibiting injurious conduct, participating in fights, disturbing/violating school rules, treating authority with disrespect and leaving school premises without permission. This data resulted in a conversation of the severity of the punishment in relation to the offense. Are schools using out of school discipline as a last resort? Are they trying other strategies first to intervene? Other questions arose such as, “Does the child have complicated issues at home?” “Could there be an issue with students acting out because they have a disability that had not been diagnosed yet?”

Council members would like to understand what is happening in the disciplinary process prior to out of school suspension and expulsion. Many students have a Response to Intervention (RTI) plan and schools have Positive Behavior Support Programs. The Council supports early screening and early identification of disabilities across the state and having experts talk about best practices and examine the strategies schools are using before resorting to suspension/expulsion, with the end goal of an overall reduction of out of school suspensions and expulsions year over year. The early years have been flagged as a concern for the department.

Louisiana Statewide Family Support Organization—Darrin Harris:

Darrin explained that his role is in conjunction with the Coordinated System of Care (CSOC). Currently, they serve 64 parishes working with families. Mr. Harris explained that the CSOC wrap around model and process works. The Ekahya Youth Project started in 2007 as a result of a grant which focused on transition aged youth who were not properly sheltered. New Orleans became HUD’s first recipient of a pilot grant that focused on transition aged youth ages 18-25. The grant required they had to provide intense case management, identify qualifying youth, and get them into homes within 48 hours. Results from the pilot were revealing: we learned that 100% had a mental behavior challenge, 85% had aged out of the foster care system from various states, but had migrated to the New Orleans area, and 100% of the youth did not have basic life skills to maintain their homes.

After the grant ended, Ekhyia continued efforts to serve transitioning youth out of foster care by becoming the first statewide family support organization. Ekhyia’s role is to ensure this population is properly transitioned into homes, stay out of hospitals, out of institutions, and ultimately, out of the grave. Currently Ekhyia serves over 2000 youth and their families throughout the state. Did presentation of their programs: The CAPS (Creative Arts Programs), Independent Living Skills building – evidence supported model created by Dr. Russy Clark, called the TIP (transition independent process) model. As the young people graduated out of the coordinated system care, they needed other supported services, so they have included some clinical services called Fresh Start Behavior Health, using the Boston University Model, and evidence based practice to ensure the young people are getting the support and help they need. When you support the whole family, the whole family becomes whole and

this is part of the work of Ekahya. Approximately 2200 families are presently part of the program, allocated 2400.

Beth Touchet --Morgan with OJJ responded to a question of how many children in CSOC end up in state custody anyway. Beth responded in favor of the program, explaining it is an invaluable service and at any given time, they have 30-90 families that have participated in the program and are usually there long term. This is a volunteer service; a judge does not order anyone into (CSOC). It prepares moms for after custody, probation, and after all interventions has stopped, to go forward. About 4 to 5% may go into custody and it is usually those who choose to not complete the program.

Roll Call

In light of the administration change and that in agency leadership, Dr. Gilmore conducted a roll call of the Advisory Board using an updated list of its members provided by Boards and Commissions. He was advised that Jessie Hartley, J.T. Lane and Lynette Celestine no longer served on the board. Sean Hamilton from OJJ was recently appointed, but Dr. Gilmore was advised that he has resigned from the agency.

Dr. Gilmore introduced Donald Songy, Education Policy Advisor for the Governor's Office, who was appointed to his position two weeks ago.

Minutes from last meeting were distributed and approved with one minor change.

CCAB Leadership: Nominating Committee Report

Dr. Gilmore thanked those who served on the nominating committee. From the nominations, the names received were Ms. Gina Womack as Chair and Ms. Hunter and Ms. Richley for Chair or Vice Chair. Ms. Richley had an interest only in the Vice-Chair position. Ms. Womack withdrew her nomination. The nominations that remained were Ms. Hunter for Chair and Ms. Richley for Vice-Chair and they were asked to step out of the room while discussions were made.

A motion to accept the nominees and close debate was made by Eric Griggs and a second by Juanita Washington.

Gina Womack-Yes

James Sprinkle – Yes

Jennifer Karl- Yes

Sherry Guarisco- Yes

Eric Griggs-Yes

Gina Eubanks-Yes

Davondra Brown-Yes

Ivy Starns-Yes

Carmen Weisner-No

Kahree Wahid-Yes

Sarah Hinshaw- Yes

Mark Thomas – Yes

Mary Scalco- Yes

Cindy Bishop-No

Jen Steele-Yes

James Hussey- Yes

Paul Carlsen-Yes

Juanita Washington-Yes

Marsha Shuler-Yes

Reshonn Saul-Yes

18-2 yeah to accept slate of nominee

Dana Hunter and Kathleen Richey were welcomed as new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board.

Dr. Gilmore shared that he is taking volunteers to serve on the by-laws committee. Davondra, Cindy, Gina, and James volunteered.

Other Business or Public comments:

Dana Hunter said the La. Trust Fund will be releasing its new RFP in January and are in the process of seeking grant reviewers. She also talked about the Look Before You Lock Campaign that was launched in May in which they partnered with DCFS and the Governor's Office of Children's Cabinet. Twenty partners that came on board, distributed over 2000 packets over, 89 organizations received the information across the state of La. each month Over 30,000 individuals were exposed to this information.

The La. Adolescent Reproductive Health Coalition will be having a phone conference meeting on Nov. 14 at 2:00 pm.

Next month is Prematurity Awareness Month, Nov. 15, March of Dimes is asking for your support by wearing purple.

Sherry Guarisco requested that an agenda item be added for next meeting in November. She expressed that she would like to get an update from the Department of Health regarding the transition from Magellan to Bayou Health as it relates to children's services.

Dr. Gilmore asked members to review the updated strategic plan that was a part of their handouts and to contact him prior to the Children's Cabinet meeting in November 1st if any changes need to be made.

The motion to adjourn was made by Juanita Washington and seconded by Carmen Weisners.