



Children's Cabinet Advisory Board Meeting

Unapproved Minutes

Claiborne Building-Thomas Jefferson Room 1-136

March 31, 2017

Member Attendees:

Alfreda Tillman Bester

Amanda Brunson

Annette L. Fruge¹

Beth Morgan

Charles Coleman

Eric Griggs, M.D.

Gerralda Davis (sent a representative)

Gina Eubanks - represented by Karn B. Aistat

Gina L. Womack

Ivy B. A. Starns

James A. Sprinkle

James E. Hussey, M.D.

Jennifer "Jen" Steele

Jennifer Karle

Juanita Washington

Kahree A. Wahid

Kathleen S. Richey

Mark A. Thomas

Marsha Shuler

Mary Beth Scalco - represented by Amy Zapata

Paul D. Carlsen, Ph.D. - represented by Rene' Cintron

Reshonn Saul

Rhenda H. Hodnett

Sarah Hinshaw-Fuselier, Ph.D.

Stephanie Sterling

Greetings and Introductions

Dr. Dana Hunter called the meeting to order at 10:05. She welcomed members to the meeting and asked members to give a brief introduction.

Executive Directors Report

There were two annual reports that needed to be submitted on January 31st: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and the Children's Cabinet report. Both of those reports have been completed and submitted. Dr. Hunter will email members the reports. There is consideration to move the LA Children's trust fund under the Governor's Office.

The Governor and First Lady went to a National Governor's Association meeting and learned that 272,000 children experience hunger on a daily basis in Louisiana. Focusing on child hunger will be a priority of the Children's cabinet. Share Our Strength is a national non-profit that launched a No Hungry Kids in New Orleans.

Dr. Hunter said 37% of schools in Louisiana had adopted Community Eligibility Provision Program in 2014-2015, which was 53% by 2015-2016. She would like to get to 100% so that kids can at least receive free breakfast and free lunch if they are attending school. The difference in performance outcomes due to this program is very significant. Percentages are rising for the highest poverty schools, but one reason schools don't qualify is they don't have the training to know how to apply or complete the application. Federal grants/applications can be cumbersome and confusing. Training budgets were cut under the Jindal administration.

Alfreda Tillman-Bester suggested requesting a federal waiver to help get to 100% of schools participating and allowing all children who qualify to receive free meals.

Dr. Hunter discussed the Child Hunger Initiative, which is "free to the state" that is chosen and chooses to adopt this initiative, though there is a cost to hire two analysts. Training, tools, software, etc. is at no cost to the state. It looks very promising that Louisiana may adopt the initiative.

Anti-Poverty Initiative: Gov. Edwards approached Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to come up with an anti-poverty agenda. The cabinet may be involved in coming up with an approach, such as work-force training, tax credits, hunger initiatives, or any other proven methods to reduce poverty rates. Ms. Bester says the focus is to help move people out of poverty long-term through not only educational skills, but soft skills such as etiquette, appropriate attire, how to write a resume, etc. Economic Development, Labor, Workforce Commission and other agencies have resources that she is trying to bring to here.

The Raise the Age report is almost finished and will be provided to the Children's Cabinet once it is available. There is a fiscal note from OJJ and the governor supports raising the age. Contract services budget has been cut 56% in the last few years, so focus is on "stepping down" kids from community services back home.

The Children's Cabinet bill has been filed to extend the Children's Cabinet. The responsibilities of the Cabinet would be transferred to the advisory board, which would allow more to be accomplished.

Dr. Proctor discussed the success of the Equal Pay Summit. Attendees heard from a wide range of advocates. One of the challenges this year is to work with the business community to make sure there's a win on both sides.

Legislative Updates

Steve Spires spoke about supporting healthy families and healthy children. The Governor supports bills to close the voucher loophole in order to prioritize kids attending C, D, and F schools, ban corporal punishment for children with disabilities, and change the value-added assessment model to improve it for teachers and students. He is also pushing for criminal justice initiatives, such as the juvenile life without parole legislation. There is a detailed list of the governor's legislative package at gov.louisiana.gov. A question was asked concerning the ability of children receiving vouchers at private and parochial schools to apply for free breakfast and lunch, which they can do as long as the school has a federally compliant lunch program.

2014-2016 Strategic Directions

Dr. Hunter says the Children and Youth Planning Board will be reconvened. It is a powerful vehicle if used correctly. Kathleen S. Richey made a motion to re-organize and break into sub-groups and then report back with priorities. The motion was seconded and passed without objection. She then recommended that everyone on the advisory board email three priorities and then votes will be held at each subsequent meeting to decide which priorities to make recommendations to the Children's Cabinet after factoring in what is already being done. Members should indicate that they would be willing to chair their priority group if this is the case. One member also suggested members submitting ideas for how to measure success. All of these items should be emailed by April 20th.

Amanda suggested combining issues related to Early Steps, Grandparents Council, and the Children's Cabinet advisory board, which Cindy said could be done depending on how the missions of each group aligned with the other. Bruce Parker said he believes the Grandparents Council falls under the Children's Cabinet in statute, not under the advisory board specifically.

Alfreda asked the Council to think about whether or not we know that the private and parochial voucher schools have submitted evaluations showing that they are performing better than C/D/F schools that kids are moving into these voucher schools from.

Bylaws Discussions

Changes to by-laws: Kathleen S. Richey recommended changing the bylaw revisions to "three consecutive meetings" rather than "three consecutive occasions." Marsha Schuler made a motion to make this change, and Beth Touchet-Morgan seconded. The motion passed without objection. The council agreed that Tuesday would be a good day for future meetings, so Dr. Hunter will send a revised meeting schedule to the board.

Public Comments

There was a public comment asking whether there would be a legislative subcommittee that would send out alerts about bills, which Dr. Hunter confirmed was discussed and established at an earlier meeting.

Meeting Adjourned.