



CHILDREN'S CABINET BOARD MEETING

APPROVED MINUTES

September 11, 2018

Capitol Press Room 4th Floor

Cabinet Members/Representative Attendees:

Deputy Secretary OJJ Dr. James Bueche, Jr.
Judge Desiree Cook Calvin
Secretary DCFS Marketa Walters
Secretary LDH Dr. Rebekah Gee (Represented by Mark Thomas)
Superintendent John C. White (Represented by Erin Bendily)
CCAB Chair Sherry Guarisco
Secretary LED Donald Pierson, Jr. (Represented by Anne G. Villa)
Secretary LWC Ava Dejoie

Cabinet Members Absent:

Representative Barbara W. Carpenter
Representative Yvonne Colomb
BESE Board Member Kathy Edmonston
Commissioner John L. Dardenne Jr.

Guests:

Governor John Bel Edwards
First Lady Donna Edwards
Dr. Adren Wilson, Deputy Chief of Staff
Teresa Falgoust, Agenda for Children

Call to Order:

Dr. Dana Hunter, Executive Director, called the meeting to order and welcomed Governor Edwards, First Lady Donna Edwards, Dr. Adren Wilson, Children's Cabinet members and guests to the September 11, 2018 Children's Cabinet Board Meeting.

Roll Call:

Roll call was conducted by Michele M. Rabalais.

Opening Remarks:

Governor John Bel Edwards provided the opening remarks.

Approval of Minutes:

Dr. Hunter, Children's Cabinet Executive Director, called for a review of the minutes and agenda. A motion was made to approve the minutes as presented. Sherry Guarisco seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Dr. Hunter informed the Board that today's meeting concerns child poverty. Several months ago the Kids Count book came out and Louisiana was ranked 50th in Economic Well Being/Child Poverty. Dr. Hunter reported that the CC will launch a new initiative regarding child poverty in Louisiana to garner the perspectives of those children and families living in poverty.

Dr. Hunter also stated that she recently attended the Metanoia Gala along with the Governor and First Lady. Dr. Hunter stated that there is a direct correlation between Human Trafficking and kids born in poverty.

First Lady Donna Edwards read a poem written by two human trafficking survivors who are currently residing at Metanoia House.

Brief Kids Count Data Overview:

Teresa Falgoust, Kids Count Program Manager, Agenda for Children, provided an overview of the latest Kids Count facts and figures. The goal of Kids Count information is to inform the public about child well-being. Ms. Falgoust stated that Kids Count measures child well-being using sixteen (16) different indicators. Currently Louisiana ranks 49th in child well-being. Ms. Falgoust stated that Louisiana is one of three states with an increase in child poverty. In addition Ms. Falgoust reported that the number of high school graduates has increased, 97% of children have some type of health insurance and there has been a decrease in teen birth rates. Discussion followed.

Child Poverty LISTENING Tour:

Dr. Dana Hunter presented information regarding a Statewide Child Poverty Listening Tour which is scheduled to be launched at the end of November 2018. Dr. Hunter reported that 49% (198,000) of African American children live in poverty. Meetings will be held with partners, stakeholders, as well as children, youth and families who are living in poverty to see what is needed and what can be done. Once all the data has been gathered a statewide convening will be held in March where national experts will be invited as well as state and local experts to discuss possible best practices. Policy makers and state leaders will also be invited to discuss what is feasible and practical for our state. Once the schedule has been finalized that information will be sent to all Cabinet Members. Discussion followed.

CCAB Budget Recommendations:

Sherry Guarisco, CCAB Board Chair, presented the CCAB budget recommendations. A list of the specific recommendations was distributed to all Cabinet members.

Sub-Committee Group Name: Older Foster Care Youth and Youth Aging Out of Care Recommendations:

1. Fully fund the implementation of Act 649 of the 2018 Regular Session (maintaining foster care for children turning 18 under certain circumstances)
2. Fund the DCFS sufficiently to establish/maintain specialized case managers for children aging out of foster care
3. Fund normalcy activities for older youth to prepare for transition

Sub-Committee Group Name: Childhood Hunger

Recommendations:

1. Expansion of SNAP E&T and other work training programs to prepare Louisianans for “in demand” jobs, thus addressing the issues of food insecurity and child hunger by preparing parents for meaningful, available work that pays a living wage.
2. Increased participation in School Feeding program in the Delta Area & throughout Louisiana. Goal of 100% of school systems that meet the criteria for free meals for all students.
3. Identify and work to eliminate “Food Deserts” around the state by leveraging and coordinating state, local and federal resources to increase access to healthy food options.
4. Leverage Louisiana 2-1-1 to help families locate the nearest source of available food assistance, such as Summer Feeding Sites and local food banks.

Sub-Committee Group Name: Services for Children with Disabilities

Sub-Committee Group Name: Early Childhood Mental Health/Early Childhood Experiences

Recommendations:

1. Ensure adequate support for children's mental health treatment, especially children birth-5, including investing in evidence-based treatment practices for very young children and their caregivers (e.g., requiring age-appropriate methods, training practitioners in the use of Diagnostic Classification: 0-5 and models such as Child Parent Psychotherapy, Parent Child Interaction Therapy, and Preschool PTSD Treatment).
2. Ensure Medicaid support (payment, network adequacy) for a range of evidence-based infant and early childhood mental health services.
3. Invest in a pilot to develop a locally coordinated, comprehensive cross-sector system of supports, from promotion and prevention to intervention, for families with infants and very young children, and the statewide infrastructure needed to replicate the model regionally.
Fund the Child Care Assistance Program

Ms. Guarisco stated that Louisiana has made significant strides in both LaChip and the funds invested in LA4. Ms. Guarisco informed the Cabinet that she took part in a meeting of the Early Care Commission prior to the Children’s Cabinet Meeting and one of the major issues discussed was the need to have more of an investment into birth to 3 years of age. In addition, an increase is also needed in funding for childcare assistance, and infant mental health. It was also recommended that DCFS receive an increase in their budget in order to increase staff. Discussion followed.

The Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board will look at all of these recommendations and see how CCAB and the Children’s Cabinet can work together.

Budget Priority Discussion:

Erin Bendily reported that the Department of Education recently received federal funding that allowed funding for 4,500 families with an additional 2,500 families still on the waiting list. This is one-time event and once this funding is lost these families will be unable to afford quality care for their children so they can work. A long term plan needs to be developed to cover the cost of child care for these families.

It was also discussed that funds should be made available for “normalcy” activities such as art, dance or music lessons for example, activities that help to make a child whole. Discussion followed.

Governor Edwards stated that current programs need to be evaluated and identify and see what programs are working and what programs have not been successful and find what programs would benefit children and fill the need.

Public Comments:

A state plan amendment for Medicaid is soon to be submitted that would allow the state to draw down federal funds for additional services for students in the school setting on the 504 plan as well as children ages 0-3 years of age. These funds would also cover personal care benefits for children 0-3. Louisiana would be the second state to do this.

Melanie Bronfin, Executive Director, Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, discussed the Early Childhood System Integration budget. Budget cuts to early childhood were discussed.

Sherry Guarisco informed the Board that in 1998 a document was published about economic development in 2020. The document included information on where the state would like to be in 2020. Discussion followed.

Ava Dejoie, LWC Secretary, discussed an increase in the minimum wage. If the minimum wage would have kept up with the rate of inflation it would now be at \$18/hour. Ms. Dejoie informed the Cabinet that the Workforce Commission is recruiting employees for the upcoming census as well as employees for the Department of Motor Vehicles and that job fairs are being held on a regular basis. Ms. Dejoie suggested that the Cabinet look at how we can augment federal training dollars as the federal training dollars are very restrictive. Discussion followed.

The question was raised as to how casino as well as hotel staff are being trained on how to spot labor and sex trafficking. Research shows that females that are trafficked generally come from broken homes and situations where they are abused. Alcohol and Tobacco Control Commissioner, Juana Marine-Lombard, reported that ATC has instituted an awareness program and training that is being offered to hotel staff and those involved in the alcohol industry as to what to look for and how to spot labor and sex trafficking. Pre-teens and teens are also being trained about alcohol, drug abuse, unprotected sex as well as human trafficking. Discussion followed.

Adjournment:

Marketa Garner-Walters made a motion to adjourn. All approved. Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting:

December 11, 2018
10:30 a.m. to 12 noon
Capitol Press Room, 4th Floor