

**Child**r**en’s Cabinet Advisory Board Meeting**

**Unapproved Minutes**

**March 14, 2023**

**Member Name: Attendees**

R. Renee Antoine Amanda Brunson

Connie Bellone Cynthia Dicarlo

Kathy Coleman Gina Eubanks

Jill Dyason Julie Foster-Hagan

Teresa Falgoust Tamara Jones

Sarah Hinshaw-Fuselier Susan East Nelson

Mattilyn Karst Kathleen Stewart Richey

Ashley Politz Lakeisha Robertson

Marsha Shuler Libbie Sonnier

Karen Stubbs Alishia R. Vallien

Kahree Wahid Angela Wiggins Harris

Gina Womack Lenell Young

ReShonn Saul

**Proxies:**

Bethany Blackson for Tonya Joiner

Joni Landry for Shanna Beber

**Staff:**

Dr. Melanie Washington, Children’s Cabinet Executive Director

Michele M. Rabalais, Children’s Cabinet Executive Assistant

**Welcome and Call to Order**:

ReShonn Saul, Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board (CCAB) Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. and welcomed all present.

**Roll Call:**

Michele M. Rabalais, called roll.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Ashley Politz made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Gina Eubanks seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

**Children’s Cabinet (CC) Initiatives**:

The Children’s Cabinet Executive Director presented the CC updates.

Updates:

1. CCAB subcommittees now all have chairs.
2. All CCAB members who have not joined a subcommittee should do so.
3. Children and Youth Planning Board Workgroup has been established.
4. CCAB statute is being updated
5. Children’s Cabinet Executive Director and other Governor’s Office staff met with Senate Counsel to discuss SB 64 (also called Ezekiel’s Law) by Senator Fesi, which would add a subcommittee to the Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board that would specifically address matters involving child abuse and neglect. The bill also adds to the membership, a member of law enforcement and the Assistant Secretary of the Office on Women’s Health, which was a recommendation from the CC Director.
6. The finalized meeting schedule for Children’s Cabinet and the Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board has been distributed.

Initiatives for 2023:

1. Vulnerable Youth Summit. The Executive Director is working with the Pelican Center and the Louisiana Supreme Court to present the Vulnerable Youth Summit to be held on August 2nd at Bethany Church. The main focus of the training is focused on truancy and strengthening families. Any ideas or recommendations for speakers, workshops etc. should be forwarded to the Children’s Cabinet Executive Director.
2. Fatherhood Conference will be held in June possibly near Father’s Day. Discussion followed.

**Early Childhood Care and Education Updates:** Cindy Bishop, Executive Director, Childcare Association of Louisiana (CCAL), provided the Early Childhood Care and Education Update. The Child Care Association of Louisiana, is a statewide nonprofit membership organization that advocates on behalf of the childcare profession. CCAL represents over 2,000 childcare providers statewide.

March 13, 2023 was the closing date for American Rescue Plan Act 3.0 grant. Since the pandemic the federal government has given Louisiana American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. ARPA funds help provide childcare agencies with a small subsidy that helps childcare agencies with sustainability. Agencies are scheduled to receive these funds in mid-May, 2023.

There are many changes coming that will affect childcare providers.

1. EdLink will be replacing the antiquated program called CAFÉ. EdLink is a new web-based portal for all new or existing early childhood providers. Tablets will be used to track students’ attendance.
2. Kid Care will be required by September 15th. This is a child and adult nutrition program that’s federally funded that childcare agencies can participate in.
3. In 2018 a federal law was passed that required portable background checks that would last for five years. Childcare centers are now having to renew all background checks at a cost of around $100 per person. The childcare center is responsible for these costs.
4. This year Louisiana childcare providers will be losing 3,000 age 0-3 slots for childcare assistance. There is currently a waiting list for slots.

CCAL believes that early care and education is the backbone for economic and workforce development. Childcare provides a safety net for parents to be able to go to work knowing that their children are being cared for and receive an education. In addition childcare centers also provide kindergarten readiness. Statistics show that 60 percent of children entering kindergarten are not ready to learn.

CCAL is sponsoring a spring educational conference March 31-April 1 at the West Baton Rouge Conference Center.

Discussion followed.

**CCAB Subcommittee Updates:**

ReShonn Saul, CCAB Chair, presented CCAB subcommittee updates. A list of sub-committees was distributed. Anyone can participate in the sub-committees whether they are a member of CCAB or not. In the future sub-committees will meet either before or after CCAB meetings. Marsha Shuler suggested that time would be allowed during the CCAB Meetings for sub-committees to meet. ReShonn Saul and the Executive Director asked for volunteers to act as co-chair(s) of the sub-committees. Discussion followed.

Theresa Falgoust, Data Sub-Committee Chair, will email an update regarding the data sub-committee. Anyone wanting to serve please let Theresa know.

Lenell Young made a motion to hold sub-committee meetings during CCAB meetings. Gina Womack seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

**Legislative Overview:**

Susan East Nelson presented the Legislative Overview. The Legislature will convene on April 10th at noon and will last until June 8th. Numerous bills have been pre-filed. This will be a fiscal only session. Legislators are limited to only 5 non-fiscal bills this session.

SB137 would create the Office of the Ombudsman for Children which would have the investigative authority to look into issues across the state that involve child serving agencies. This would be under the legislators authority and completely independent of the agencies that are being regulated.

Other issues include:

* School feeding issues
* CCAB revision bill
* Vaccines
* Early learning development standards
* Appropriate supports for children
* Mental health
* Corporal punishment
* Protections for children who are victims of sexual assault

Ms. Nelson also informed CCAB Members that the Children’s Day at the Capitol will be held on April 12, 2023. Children’s Health/LA CASA Day at the Capitol will be held on May 9, 2023. Discussion followed.

**Agency/Department Legislative Overview:**

Bethany Blackson reported on behalf of the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH). Ms. Blackson reported on the following bills:

* Medicaid Bill – streamline Medicaid contracts
* Hemp – define what products are considered hemp
* Early detection – newborn screening statute

A couple of other priorities this session include the following:

Medicaid unwind: Continuous coverage requirement ends April 1, 2023. LDH and its partners are pushing out the message to make sure all Medicaid recipients have updated their information. Discussion followed.

Karen Stubbs with LDH informed CCAB discussed Adolescent Behavioral Health. LDH has five upcoming initiatives:

* Expansion of TANF facilities which includes residential substance abuse treatment where mothers and their children can reside. Over the past few years the number of available beds has decreased and LDH and DCFS are working together to increase the number of beds available and funds to provide for necessary items for children such as playground equipment and supplies for children. Discussion followed.
* Early Childhood Supports and Services – Pilot implementation of Early Childhood Supports and Services. Working with Tulane and LSU to roll program out statewide.
* Crisis Services – building the foundation for crisis mobile services as well as crisis community services which occur 15 day follow up if a client receives crisis mobile services.
* Treating children’s trauma using the evidence based practice Dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT). DBT is a type of cognitive behavioral therapy. DBT may be used to treat suicidal and other self-destructive behaviors. Discussion followed.
* Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) – Currently there are seven located across the state that offer residential level of care that serve youth and adolescents. LDH is interested in having a PRTF that specifically serves children and youth with developmental disabilities. An RFP will be issued later this year to award start-up funds for likely one provider. Discussion followed.

Joni Landry reported on behalf of the Louisiana Department of Education. Joni Landry reported that the Department of Education is tracking the following bills:

* HB8 – requires display of the national motto “In God We Trust” in each public classroom.
* HB 9 – Creates and provides for a program to provide state funding for the education of students with exceptionalities not enrolled in public school
* HB 12 – Prohibits promotion to the fourth grade of certain students whose reading deficiencies have not been remedied by the end of the third grade
* HB 21 – Provides relative to extended leave for school bus operators and public school employees
* HB 32 – Increases the amount of the individual income tax deductions for elementary and secondary school tuition, educational expenses for home-schooled children, and educational expenses for a quality public education
* HB 42 – Requires all public and nonpublic schools to accept a student's documentation relative to exemption from immunization requirements and requires that communication issued to students or parents about such requirements include exemption information
* HB 56 – Authorizes the Monroe City School Board to levy an ad valorem tax for the purpose of funding early childhood care and education
* HB 61 – Provides for consent of a legal representative of a minor who contracts with certain parties.
* HB 68 – Authorizes public high schools to offer a course of instruction in the history and literature of the Bible
* HB 69 – Provides for the screening and diagnosis of students with respect to dyslexia
* HB 78 – Provides relative to school facilities preservation and system wide needs programs in certain school districts
* SB 10 – Increases the individual income tax exemption for deposits into certain education savings accounts for tuition expenses for elementary and secondary schools
* SB 12 – Requires an automated external defibrillator on the premises of all educational institutions and at sponsored athletic events
* SB 18 – Provides for benefit increases for retirees, beneficiaries, and survivors of state retirement systems and the funding required.
* SB 25 - Provides relative to certain schools returned from the Recovery School District

Discussion followed.

Ashley Politz made a motion to extend the CCAB Meeting by 10 minutes in order to cover all information and presentations. Kathleen Stewart Richey seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Konitra Jack presented for Department of Children and Family Services on behalf of Amanda Brunson. Ms. Jack reported that DCFS is following one bill HB #337 which would eliminate the minimum child support award in the child support guidelines. Discussion followed.

Andrea Morrison presented for the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC). LWC has no bills filed but they are monitoring the following bills:

* HB 40 - Provides relative to employment discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation
* HB 51 – Provides relative to the verification of attendance at employment interviews
* HB 63 - Provides relative to electronic signatures by judges

**Acknowledgement of Public and Public Comments:**

Jill Dyason informed CCAB Members that the Louisiana Association of Children and Family Agencies will be hosting a training in April. Six CEU hours will be available to those who attend. Further information will be emailed to CCAB members.

Kathleen Stewart Richey informed CCAB Members that on March 30th Louisiana CASA will host a webinar featuring Melanie Richardson. The webinar will focus on knowledge of parenting and effective parenting tools.

In addition, ReShonn Saul informed CCAB Members about the following upcoming conferences:

Governor’s Conference on Juvenile Justice

March 21 - March 23, 2023

New Orleans Marriott Warehouse Art District Hotel

Louisiana FINS Conference

Apr 24, 2023 - Apr 26, 2023

Renaissance Baton Rouge Hotel

Louisiana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

April 28, 2023

Holiday Inn South, Baton Rouge

**Upcoming CCAB meeting(s):**

May 16, 2023 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

July 11, 2023 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

September 12, 2023 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

November 14, 2023 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Adjournment: Susan East Nelson made a motion to adjourn. Jill Dyason seconded the motion. All approved. Meeting adjourned.