

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

**Unapproved Minutes**

**July 30, 2024**

**Member Name: Attendees**

Ursula Anderson Shanna Beber

Gina Eubanks Julie Foster-Hagan

Annette Fruge Sarah Hinshaw-Fusilier

Amy Hook-Poirrier Ronald Johnson

Tonya Joiner Krystle Mitchell

Chenier Montz Amanda Moody

Susan East Nelson Kathleen Richey

ReShonn Saul Ernise Singleton

Libbie Sonnier Stephanie Sterling

Karen Stubbs Angela Wiggins-Harris

Gina B. Womack Lenell Young

**Staff:**

Jolie Williamson, Children’s Cabinet Executive Director

Michele M. Rabalais, Children’s Cabinet Executive Assistant

**Guests:**

Michelle Gros, Pelican Center

Joshua Campbell, Calcasieu Parish Juvenile Justice Office

**Welcome and Call to Order**:

ReShonn Saul, Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board (CCAB), Chair called the meeting to order at 10:18 a.m.

**Roll Call:**

Michele M. Rabalais, Executive Assistant, called roll.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Susan East Nelson made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 25 and May 28, 2024 meeting(s) as presented. Lenell Young seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

**Opening Address**:

Jolie Williamson, Children’s Cabinet Executive Director provided the opening address. Ms. Williamson informed Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board Members that subcommittee recommendations are due no later than August 31, 2024. In addition, Ms. Williamson informed CCAB members that a new subcommittee has been formed “Partners in Protecting Children”. Discussion followed.

**Vulnerable Youth Subcommittee**: Michelle Gros, COO of the Pelican Center, reported on behalf of the Vulnerable Youth subcommittee.

Ms. Gros informed CCAB members that there has been an increase in truancy, juvenile detention as well as an increase in children entering foster care. Discussion followed.

**Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC**):

Joshua Campbell with the Calcasieu Parish Juvenile Justice Office discussed the Multi-Agency Resource Center located in Calcasieu Parish.

The purpose of the Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) is for area agencies and organizations to provide services, and referral to these services, currently available to area juveniles in the community, all under one roof. The facility and overall project is a collaborative effort with the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury and the Calcasieu Parish Children and Youth Planning Board.  
  
The pooling of resources in the MARC facility doesn’t introduce new programs or services. Rather, it reduces the length of time a juvenile must wait to have access to current community services, from several weeks to a matter of hours. For Juveniles involved in criminal activity, the MARC features a secure intake area staffed by MARC personnel, which will also reduce the time a law enforcement officer spends holding custody over the subject.

Once at the MARC, needs are addressed and determined with each Juvenile based on data collected from an assessment process of testing and interviews. Information collected through this process assists staff in identifying the best approach to take with the juvenile. The MARC Process also makes every attempt to direct juveniles away from the juvenile justice system whenever possible, resulting in more productive outcomes for the youth and their families.  
  
The MARC is supported through a grant made possible by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation’s [Louisiana Models for Change.](https://www.calcasieu.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/1818/636064246813170000) MARC services coordinate with the 14th Judicial District Court’s Family and Juvenile Court Division, the Calcasieu Parish School Board, the Calcasieu Parish District Attorney’s Office, the Calcasieu Parish Public Defenders’ Office, local enforcement and others.

When a juvenile is detained by Police the officer has a choice as to whether to bring the juvenile to the MARC Center or to the detention center. Since the MARC Center opened the number of juveniles in the detention center has been reduced. Discussion followed.

**LCTF Five Year State Plan Children’s Caucus:**

Ursula Anderson, Louisiana Children’s Trust Fund (LCTF) Executive Director, presented information regarding the LCTF State Plan. In preparation for development of the State Plan LCTF is holding the 2024 Caucus for Children. Every voice is very important for our children’s future. This plan will cover the next five years of strategic efforts **to** prevent child abuse and neglect across Louisiana.

City leaders, educators, faith-based leaders, non-profit/civic organizations, law enforcement, medical as well as legal professionals, social groups etc. have been invited to attend. Meetings will be held in all nine regions.

Two Zoom sessions for those unable to attend in person. A list of Caucus meeting date(s), time(s) and location(s) was distributed to CCAB members.

**Executive Committee Votes**:

**Addendum to Minutes:**

***Susan East Nelson made a motion to bring the concept of a follow up Summit to the Children’s Cabinet. Gina Eubanks seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.***

ReShonn Saul nominated Gina Womack for Secretary of the Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board. Susan East Nelson seconded the nomination. Ms. Womack accepted the nomination.

Lenell Young made a motion to accept Gina Womack as Secretary for the Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board. Susan East Nelson seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Nominations for Vice Chair were tabled until the next CCAB Meeting

**Formation of New Subcommittee, Partners in Protecting Children**:

HR 305 directs the Children’s Cabinet to form the Partners in Protecting Children Subcommittee to study the needs of the child welfare system in the state as well as the causes and effects of child abuse and neglect, the legal aspects of child protection and foster care and effective training programs for employees who work with families where child abuse is suspected.

The study shall analyze the challenges facing children and families in this state receiving assistance and care through the Department Children and Family Services and provide recommendations to improve outcomes and protect children.

A copy of the report from the Partners in Protecting Children Subcommittee summarizing its findings and recommendations must be submitted to the House Committee on Health and Welfare by February 1, 2025.

Jolie Williamson, Children’s Cabinet Executive Director, asked for volunteers to serve on the newly formed subcommittee. Kathy Coleman volunteered to act as Chairman of the Partners in Protecting Children Subcommittee. Other volunteers include: Michelle Shelton, Amanda Moody, Sarah Hinshaw-Fusilier, Joshua Campbell, Sherrard Crespo and Michelle Gros.

**Other Business**:

Ursula Anderson shared dates/locations of upcoming Louisiana Caucus meetings.

Louisiana Department of Education is looking for tutors for children and young adults in grades K-12.

Upcoming Conferences:

The Governor’s Conference on Juvenile Justice is scheduled for August 21-23, 2024 in Shreveport.

Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families Annual Meeting is scheduled for September 20, 2024.

Southwest Louisiana Human Trafficking Institute will be held September 19th in Lake Charles.

**Public Comments:** None

Adjournment: Susan East Nelson made a motion to adjourn. Angela Wiggins-Harris seconded the motion. All approved. Meeting adjourned.

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