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Governor

State of Louisiana
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Children's Cabinet Meeting Unapproved Minutes April 3, 2025

Members Present

Commissioner Taylor Barras represented by Sonia Mallett
Superintendent Dr. Cade Brumley represented by Sabre Masters
Simone Champagne, BESE
Secretary Drew Maranto, Louisiana Department of Health, represented by Tangela Womack
Secretary Kenneth "Kenny" Loftin, Office of Juvenile Justice
Secretary David N. Matlock, Department of Children and Family Services
Susana Schowen, Louisiana Workforce Commission represented by Jim Garvey
Senator Regina Barrow
Judge Thomas Duplantier represented by Amy Holland

Staff:

Jolie Williamson, Executive Director
Michele Rabalais, LCTF/CC Exec. Assistant

Call to Order:

Jolie Williamson, Children's Cabinet Executive Director, welcomed members and guests.

Roll Call:

Michele M. Rabalais, Executive Assistant, called roll.

Approval of Minutes: Simone Champagne moved for approval of February 6, 2025 minutes as presented. Secretary David Matlock seconded the motion. All approved.

LCTF Grant Proposal Recommendations: Ursula Anderson, LCTF Executive Director, presented the Louisiana Children's Trust Fund Grant Recommendations and a list of recommendations was distributed to Cabinet Members.

In addition, Ms. Anderson presented the mission of the Louisiana Children's Trust Fund as well as the grant review process. Discussion followed.

Secretary Kenneth "Kenny" Loftin moved for approval of the LCTF Grant Proposal Recommendations as presented. Secretary David Matlock seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried

The Importance of Recess: Melissa Cormier of Moss Bluff Middle School, discussed the importance of recess in a child's life.

Recess provides numerous benefits for students, impacting their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive well-being. It allows for physical activity, which is crucial for health and can improve academic performance. Recess also fosters social and emotional development by providing opportunities for interaction, conflict resolution, and creative play. Furthermore, it can reduce stress and improve attention and focus in the classroom.

In addition to the physical, social, and emotional benefits of recess, a significant amount of research indicates that recess can provide academic benefits through enhanced cognitive development. This benefit comes from both the exploratory aspect of unstructured free-play time, but also from the interruption of focused periods of concentration in the classroom. Unstructured breaks from cognitive tasks have been shown to lead to increased attention and productivity in the classroom. Discussion followed.

Whole Health Louisiana: Dr. Anna Osland, Director of Research at the Kathleen Blanco Public Policy Center, presented information on the Whole Health Louisiana Plan.

The Whole Health Louisiana (WHL) State Plan is Louisiana's first statewide plan to systematically address the widespread issue of childhood adversity and trauma through the integration of trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches in our state's systems of care and support for children and families. Addressing this issue is critical to the well-being and fulfillment of our state's children, families, and communities.

WHL's mission is to transform Louisiana's cross-system collaboration and community-specific care, so that together we can effectively prevent, recognize, and treat childhood adversity and its effects, allowing the people of Louisiana to access their full potential.

The Whole Health Louisiana (WHL) State Plan includes an overview of trauma-informed and adversity-related concepts, four priority areas with recommendations and objectives to achieve the goal of each priority and an implementation approach that has buy-in across youth and family serving systems. This unified, trauma-informed, State Plan will invest in the full potential of our young people, those who care for them and the workforce that serves them to improve health and safety outcomes for all Louisianans.

Priority Areas of the WHL State Plan:

- ***Collaboration:*** Connect and align government agencies, community-based organizations, educational institutions, and healthcare providers to create a seamless network of support for children and families.
- ***Awareness:*** Inform the public, policymakers, and workforce about the impacts and drivers of childhood trauma to reduce stigma and encourage the adoption of evidence-based, early intervention and preventative measures.
- ***Prevention + Healing:*** Expand preventive programs, access to services, and community-based initiatives that promote resilience and well-being.
- ***Workforce:*** Implement strategies for training and support to ensure that frontline workers can effectively care for themselves and those they serve.

Solutions Summit Update: Dr. Ernise Singleton provided an update on the Solutions Summit.

The 2025 Solutions Summit entitled 'From Truancy to Triumph. From Absence to Opportunity' will be a statewide collaborative initiative held on September 8, 2025 at the Four Points by Sheraton Convention Center.

To combat escalating rates of Louisiana students being absent from the classroom, educators, judges, social workers, and community members will be invited to participate. The goal is to collaborate on effective strategies that address root causes and enhance student engagement.

Identified stakeholders will receive an emailed invitation to register. Space is limited and we anticipate filling up the available spots quickly.

Key state leaders, educators, child welfare professionals, justice system stakeholders, school resource officers and community advocates for a collaborative summit will focus on addressing and reducing truancy in Louisiana.

Other Business: Jolie Williamson, Children's Cabinet Executive Director, presented the following Proclamations:

A proclamation was presented to Sherrard Crespo, Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana, proclaiming April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Another proclamation was presented to Melissa "Missy" Cormier, proclaiming Louisiana Youth Outdoor Engagement Month.

Public Comments:

Next Meeting: August 14, 2025