



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE *of* PROGRAMS *and* PLANNING

**CHILDREN'S CABINET ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES**

April 13, 2018

Claiborne Building, Thomas Jefferson Room 136 A-B

**Member Name: Attendees**

Alfreda Tillman-Bester	Jennifer Karle
Melanie Bronfin	Kelly Lynn Pepper
Renee Antoine	Kathleen Stewart Richey
Sue Catchings	Reshon Saul
Lynn Clark	Mary Beth Scalco
Gina Eubanks	Katina Semien
Annette Fruge	Marsha Shuler
Sarah Hinshaw-Fuselier	Mark A. Thomas
Sherry S. Guarisco	Michael Victorian
Glen Holt	Melanie Washington
Kristin Savicki for Dr. James Hussey	

**Non-Members: Guests**

David Lake	Andrea Hefner
Ashley Knezek	Chris Cook
Steve Kaufman	Vanessa Williams
Otha C. Nelson	Bambi Polotzola
Elizabeth Holzer	Ana Bales
Donald Songy	Brenda Sharp
Elizabeth Holzer	Ana Bales
Brenda Sharp	Carlos Plancate
LaTasha Henderson	Susan East-Nelson
Jeannie Donavon	Lenell Young

**Call to Order:**

Sherry Guarisco, Board Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the April 13<sup>th</sup> Children's Cabinet Advisory Board Meeting.

Michele M. Rabalais, Children's Cabinet/Children's Trust Fund Executive Assistant called roll. All guests were invited to introduce themselves.

Ms. Guarisco called for a review of the agenda and minutes. Jennifer Karle made a motion to approve the minutes with the necessary amendments. Gina Eubanks seconded the motion. All approved.

## **Executive Directors Report:**

Dr. Dana Hunter, Children's Cabinet Executive Director, gave the following Children's Cabinet Update:

a.) **Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month:**

Dr. Dana Hunter informed the CCAB that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month as well as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Dr. Hunter stated that she had the privilege of visiting and taking a group of LSU students to the Baton Rouge Child Advocacy Center. Dr. Hunter felt that this was very beneficial to students. They learned about the responsibilities and role of the Child Advocacy Center. Baton Rouge CAC is the only CAC in the state that uses the mind, body medicine as well as trauma informed cognitive therapy.

- a. **Pass the Pinwheel:** Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana, instead of planting pinwheels, decided to pass out pinwheels to individuals as a thank you for preventing child abuse.
- b. **LCTF Day at the Capitol:** The Louisiana Children's Trust Fund which serves as a funding source of child abuse/neglect prevention held its Annual Day at the Capitol on April 12, 2018. This event is an opportunity to bring attention to child abuse and neglect prevention efforts within the state.

Dr. Dana Hunter announced that the Governor's Office is partnering with Wal-Mart to fight childhood hunger throughout the state. Wal-Mart works with food banks across the country to help ensure that no child goes hungry. The Governor and the First Lady will be at the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank on April 30<sup>th</sup> to kick-off the partnership.

Dr. Hunter addressed the 'Raise the Age' law. The Raise the Age Committee continues to meet and discuss ways to enact the legislation that has already been passed. Erin Monroe Wesley with the Governor's Office has been meeting with and talking to legislators concerning legislation that would delay the implementation of the law. Representative Robert E. Shadoin has bill that would delay Raise the Age until March, 2019 but will put the bill on hold.

Dr. Hunter reported that she has been working with Opal West with JDAI to reduce the number of children going into detention. Dr. Hunter and Ms. West are looking into a site visit to New Jersey that has a model program. Discussion followed.

Sherry Guarisco requested information as to whether or not the hunger initiative is reaching young children such as those children involved in childcare. Dr. Hunter brought this information to Bill Lovely, Southwest Regional Director USDA and Dr. Hunter stated that the food programs are available to child care assistance programs as well as early childhood programs. Sherry Guarisco stated that meals are available for licensed centers but that questioned if they are available to home-based childcare. Dr. Hunter reported that innovative options are being explored. Discussion followed.

**Budget Update – HB1:** Donald Songy, Education Policy Advisor, presented the Budget Update. Mr. Songy reported that approximately \$2.2 billion dollars of temporary revenue will expire June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Songy stated that the Estimating Revenue Conference met April 12<sup>th</sup> and that at this time there appears to be a \$650 million dollar deficit. This is the amount of money that the Governor recommends should be in the budget to continue state operations without making cuts. In order to raise the revenue, another special session will need to be called. Legislators are looking at shortening the regular session and having a three-week special session to address revenue and ways to generate more money into the budget. Without additional funding higher education, criminal justice and health care will suffer cuts. Contracts with hospitals will have to be cancelled, causing a loss of services to those in needs. Discussion followed.

A letter was sent to legislators on behalf of the Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board during session addressing concerns about the fiscal cliff.

Melanie Bronfin stated that she believed that CCAB was to report to the legislature regarding priorities. Sherry Guarisco stated that it is part of the law that the CCAB present a list of priorities to the Children’s Cabinet by August and a list of specific budget priorities by November. Ms. Guarisco stated that the CCAB will begin discussing those issues at the June Board Meeting in order to meet the August timeframe.

Ms. Bronfin proceeded to make a motion that CCAB as a body testify in a white card informational before the Senate Finance Committee to the impact of the budget in its current posture on children. Alfreda Tillman-Bester felt these concerns should first be addressed with the Children’s Cabinet to avoid conflict with the agency heads. Discussion followed. Kathleen Stewart-Richey suggested that the Louisiana Partnership would be a good agency to speak before the committee to represent children and families. It was also stated that the CCAB needs to get the public involved about what will happen if budget cuts are passed. Kathleen Stewart-Richey made a substitute motion that the CCAB support the Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families testifying before the legislature regarding the impact of budgetary cuts on children and families. Sue Catchings seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

**Sub-Committees Report on Legislation:** CCAB has four groups that are working that include a wide range of issues that are a great concern to all. These issues include: Childhood Hunger, Early Childhood Experiences, Youth Aging out of Foster Care and School Health Issues.

- i.) **Childhood Hunger:** Alfreda Tillman Bester, DCFS Assistant Secretary, Family Support Programs, reviewed information on childhood hunger that was provided to the Children’s Cabinet in December. Ms. Bester focused on the link between childhood hunger and ending poverty, indicating that education and training are needed. Ms. Bester reported DCFS has met with USDA staff that work with food and nutrition services that provide school feedings. They are working together with providers across the state especially in the Delta area to provide an opportunity to help parents move out of poverty through education. Discussion followed.

Ms. Bester addressed upcoming legislation of concern, including HB402 that will require employees who don't work 90 days to reimburse employers for the cost of background checks. Sherry Guarisco suggested that the new background check in childcare are an issue and suggested discussion with the Child Care Association to identify solutions. Discussion followed.

Ms. Bester reported that the President signed an Executive Order on April 10<sup>th</sup> on reducing poverty in America by promoting opportunity and economic mobility. Ms. Bester will send a link to the Executive Order to CCAB Members. Discussion followed.

- ii. School Health: Marsha Shuler reported on School Health. Ms. Shuler stated that her group has been meeting to look at increasing Medicaid dollars in schools to increase health care services for children. Ms. Shuler stated they are working to try and get health and education to work together to offer better health care for children. Behavioral health is a key component. Discussion followed.
- iii. Early Childhood Experience: Sarah Hinshaw-Fusilier reported on Early Childhood Experiences. The two main recommendations of this group were as follows:
  - a.) Convene key stakeholders to finalize and operationalize an early childhood master plan for Louisiana's approach to supporting young children.
  - b.) Identify and secure funding to pilot a locally coordinated comprehensive cross-sector system of supports for families of infants and young children and offer support for professionals. Within LDH there has been a response to the recommendations and discussion has followed to put together a proposal to present to the Governor and the Children's Cabinet.

Sherry Guarisco reported that HB676 would create an Early Childhood Care and Education Commission to address these issues.

Other legislation includes HB818 which establishes and provides for the healthy moms/healthy babies advisory council, focused on African-American women and health disparities. HB513 would increase funding for the child care assistance program, with \$10 million out of unclaimed property to be used as additional funding for the child care assistance program. Discussion followed.

- iv. Youth Aging out of Foster Care: Kathleen Stewart-Richey reported resolution has been filed that requires a commission to study extending foster care past 18 years of age. SB129 is a voluntary and would extend foster care for foster children who are still full time students till they either graduation or they turn 21. The federal government has matching funds available for foster children that stay in care until the age 21. It does require the department to contact the child at age 17 and every ninety days after until the child reaches 18 so the child can plan to complete high school. Acceptance of the benefits and services shall in no way deprive the person in foster care the rights conferred by reaching the age of majority. Discussion followed.

**2018 Legislative Update:** Dr. Dana Hunter reported that federal legislation has been passed and signed by President Trump banning on-line human trafficking. Back Page has been completely shut down and Craig's List adverts have been banned.

Jeannie Donovan informed the Board about HB284 that would assure that all schools provide at least one full meal a day to all students. No child can be denied a meal and there would be no consequences for children who cannot pay for a meal on any given day. Ms. Donovan also reported on HB735 that would establish a workforce training pilot initiative to serve public assistance recipients in certain regions in north Louisiana.

Sherry Guarisco stated that Susan East-Nelson with the Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families will create a channel to track bills that the CCAB is interested in following. Ms. Guarisco asked if there were any other bills that were not mentioned that the CCAB would like to follow. Steve Kaufman stated that there was bill, SB303, which is in committee and that whereas children accused of bullying could suffer the possibility of arrest. Discussion followed. Other bills of interest included HB292 that provides relative to the use of a facility dog by a witness during a court proceeding. The dogs are used by Child Advocacy Centers to help children out during interviews and court proceedings.

A list bills being tracked will be available on the Louisiana Partnership's website.

**Other Business:** Meeting schedule is as follows:

**Upcoming CCAB meetings:**

Friday, August 17, 2018	10:00 am -12:00 pm (CCAB)	Claiborne Building, Thomas Jefferson Room
Tuesday, October 9, 2018	10:00 am -12:00 pm (CCAB)	Claiborne Building, Thomas Jefferson Room
Friday, December 14, 2018	10:00 am -12:00 pm (CCAB)	Capitol Press Room, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor

**Upcoming Children's Cabinet meeting:**

Tuesday, July 17, 2018	10:30 am -12:00 pm (CC)	Capitol Press Room Room 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor
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**Public Comments:** Lenell Young stated that the Louisiana Parenting Education Network is coming up soon and all are invited to register and attend.

**Adjournment:** Sue Catchings made a motion to adjourn. Alfred Tillman-Bester seconded the motion. All approved. Meeting adjourned.