

Georgia Children's Cabinet
Thursday, March 17, 2011 - Minutes
8:00 AM - 10:00 AM
The Governor's Mansion, 391 W. Paces Ferry Road, Atlanta, GA

Members Attending: First Lady Sandra Deal, Jen Bennecke (GOCF), James Whitfield (CJCJ), Bobby Cagle (DECAL), Rachelle Carnesale (DFCS), Clyde Reese (DHS), Amy Howell (DJJ), Tonya Boga (OCA), David Tanner (OPB)

Members Not Attending: Eric John (CJCJ) Dr. Frank Shelp (DBHDD), David Cook (DCH), Debbie Hall (DCH) Rob Rosenbloom (DJJ), Dr. John Barge (DOE), Garry McGiboney (DOE), Tonia Poole (Disability Services)

Others Attending: Monica Parker (DBHDD), James T. Peoples (DCH), James Hall (DCH), Sharon King (DCH), Margaret Cawood (DJJ), David Werner (Governor's Office), Judge Velma Tilley (Juvenile Court of Bartow County), Judge Steve Teske (Juvenile Court of Clayton County), Ember Bishop (First Lady's Office), Helena Schneider (GOCF)

Agenda Issue	Discussion	Conclusion/ Action to Take/Follow up
Introductions and Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Deal. Introductions and welcomes were made. The First Lady gave a brief overview of this meeting's agenda. 	
Juvenile Code Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commissioner Howell discussed the Juvenile Code Rewrite specifically relating to Children in Need of Services (CHINS). The Cabinet created a sub-committee to review the issue. CHINS Sub-committee had had two conference calls. Minutes from the calls attached. Research was done in follow-up to the call discussions. ➤ Judge Steve Teske discussed Clayton County's bad press over the past decade. In 2003 there was a 58% graduation rate. There was significant increase in crime: juvenile, violent crime and severe gang activity. ➤ They explored other alternatives and reached out to Annie E. Casey. They chose to implement the Juvenile Detention Alternative initiative that includes 8 core strategies. Most significant was collaboration, second largest is judicial leadership. ➤ By employing these 2 core strategies they created a Juvenile Justice Collaborative Team. Decided to focus on the FAST Track: Finding Alternatives for Safety and Treatment. ➤ They found many juveniles needed to be on a different track than juvenile justice, whether it be social services or mental health. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduation rates have risen by 20% thanks to these initiatives. • Suspension rates have fallen by 10%. • Reduced detention by 58%. • Reduced school referrals by 70%. • Reduced weapons on campus by 70%. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Currently they are working with 48 identified gangs. ➤ System of Care grant received from GOFC is a great help. There are still problems and issues to work through; however, Clayton County is turning around. They went from over 40 murders down to 7. ➤ Recidivism rates have gone down amongst juveniles. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Judge Velma Tilley from Bartow County Juvenile Court and Margaret Cawood, Regional Administrator, DJJ, NW GA, presented on the WIN GA system of care. ➤ In 2003, formal collaboration began with 5 judges from 7 counties. We noted that we kept seeing the same kids in their courtrooms who were the children in need of services (CHINS) arguing between DJJ and DFCS who should provide service, and so we began collaborating. ➤ For the past 8 years, we meet every second Friday of the month. They started with anecdotal problems, but very quickly moved to looking at data and very specific information with the thought process of “How can we do this better.” ➤ They found out about System of Care and the principles of SOC, and have used this vehicle for getting better outcomes for children, and then received a SAMSHA grant in 2008. ➤ They discovered that judicial leadership is critical. They bring credibility and accountability to other stakeholders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They have a judicial co-chair and administrative co-chair. Judge Tilley and Judge Sandra Miller serve as Judicial co-chairs. ➤ DJJ and DFCS used this process to develop regional agreement and procedures based upon the state department. Department of Behavioral Health used the information provided to repurpose the dollars to get more effective services ➤ Juvenile Justice: 2004 – 2009: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced intake by 770 ● Reduced commitments by 188 ● Reduced the use of detention in 15 counties ➤ SAMSHA grant has created positive outcomes. OPB and others felt this regional model is the way we need to think for the State of Georgia. This would be hard to replicate for the 159 counties because there isn’t enough money. ➤ They want to partner with other agencies to interview from Birth to 6 so that the children don’t get deeper into the system. ➤ START program deals with substance abusing parents, substantiated abuse and neglect. They are trying to deal with these issues early on so they don’t become children with high mental issues. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commissioner Howell stated the subcommittee wanted to present this to the group for larger discussion and then reconvene to discuss next steps. ➤ Other issue: Code Rewrite Bill was also moving very quickly at this time. This poses the question of whether or not this is something the Cabinet is interested in taking a position on. ➤ We need best practice model for CHINS and guidance for next steps. ➤ Commissioner Howell hasn't taken a position on the policy itself. Georgia wants CHINS as a model, and noted that it might be helpful to come up with an operational model. She commented that it was a twofold question: Whether we want to embrace the idea of CHINS and what would it look like? ➤ Mrs. Deal commented that she is still learning her way and has read through legislative materials. ➤ Commissioner Reese asked if the CHINS portion of the rewrite lends itself to stopping the discussion that it is not my job it's yours. ➤ Jen Bennecke asked if we wanted to consider adopting system of care as a best practice for operationalizing CHINS? How can we operate: Do you want to say that we are beginning exploration on this? What is the deliverable? How can the subcommittee replicate the Northwest Model? As a cabinet do we want to respond and provide an alternative? 	<p>Reconvene to discuss next steps and evaluate at our next meeting.</p>
<p>Runaway and Homeless Youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Cabinet had some robust conversations about the runaway and homeless youth population. This crosses many of our agencies. We discussed initial ideas on how to address the problem and we discovered that we didn't really know much about this population. ➤ We decided to do some research and collect data on this population. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First decided to look at the number of children in Georgia that were runaway or homeless. We partnered with DCA as they did their homeless count every other year ○ We hired current and former homeless youth to survey other homeless youth. This was held in January so the final results should be available by our next meeting. ➤ We did a White Paper for best practices and characteristics of the youth. Research pointed to the need for continued services to be provided to this population, including a multidisciplinary approach. ➤ Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count all runaway and homeless youth (completed-awaiting results) 	<p>Committee will review recommendations , and also await the final report from the January RHY study</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an assessment to determine the full range of needs for these youths through focus groups and forms • Perform a comprehensive analysis of early childhood histories (social autopsies) • Develop SOC for runaway and homeless youth in Georgia 	
Outcomes and Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cabinet developed a subcommittee to develop an Outcome Dashboard. ➤ Question: how often would we monitor these measures? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jen Bennecke suggested that we report on an annual basis. ○ David Tanner suggested that we also explore a couple of key indicators that are tracked quarterly. ➤ Cabinet reviewed the draft and provided comments on additions and deletions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commissioner Reese asked if we knew the number of homeless youth that still attend school and if there was a way to confirm these numbers. ○ Jen Bennecke commented that some of the homeless youth go to school to keep up appearances so that no one knows they are homeless. 	<p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Revise dashboard with input from Cabinet and designees ➤ Draft scoreboard, to include baseline data and year one targets
Cabinet Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mrs. Deal asked if there are other agencies that should be part of the cabinet. ➤ Jen Bennecke asked if we should include: non-profit, corporate or faith community. ➤ There was discussion on identifying key initiatives before we bring in additional agencies. ➤ Mrs. Deal commented that we do not want to dilute the efforts of the core group. ➤ We might want an agency to come in and give a report. 	
Volunteerism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This is a priority for Mrs. Deal. ➤ David Tanner noted that state government as a whole has not tapped in to this group. He mentioned that this could be an opportunity to plug volunteers in to our program. ➤ Mrs. Deal commented that we need to be very careful due to privacy issues. But we should be able to find something for volunteers to do. 	
Announcements and Agency Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tonya Boga informed the Cabinet that the Office for the Child Advocate has been working on various improvements to their agency. She mentioned they were involved in the Front Porch Project working with the American Humane Society. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their main focus and priority is to have the community involved in child welfare and to allow communities to become more involved in helping children in their early stages. • They are using the “train the trainer” model to 	

	<p>work with children before they get involved with juvenile issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Humane Society is helping to train our staff, and in turn they are equipped to go out and work with their local communities. <p>➤ The key is to help children so they don't go down the wrong path.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify issues for example: why aren't children attending schools? Is this because their parents might not be around to get them on the bus, etc. • The thought process was to use volunteers to help the parents and the community. 	
	<p>➤ Commissioner Howell from DJJ spoke about the Emmanuel Project. This is a non-profit group named after a muralist from Colorado. Their message is "Touch the Heart of a Child." The Emmanuel Projects provides a muralist that donates art supplies to classrooms and works with the children. The artist incorporates the faces of the children that are in this project. DJJ has had two unveilings: one at their female facility and one at the male facility. The name of the mural from the male facility is called "Spirit of Education."</p> <p>➤ Commissioner Howell noted the change in the kids that are involved. They are very proud to be involved in this project and this has created positive reinforcement.</p>	
	<p>➤ Commissioner Reese from the Department of Human Services brought his Deputy, Sharon King. Sharon King will attend meetings on his behalf when he is unable to partake.</p> <p>➤ Commissioner Reese discussed the reorganization in DFCS, and introduced his Director, Rachelle Carnesale. Their website has been updated to include their new org chart.</p> <p>➤ Commissioner Cagle from DECAL discussed the importance of getting children ready for kindergarten including screening and immunization making sure that the child has all the necessary services in order to be successful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commissioner Cagle also noted that many of their talented social workers are losing their jobs. He is working closely with DOL to try to get them re-employed. 	
Closing and Adjourn	<p>➤ Mrs. Deal thanked the Cabinet members for their attendance and participation, encouraging the effectiveness of the Children's Cabinet.</p> <p>➤ Meeting was adjourned at 9:52 AM.</p>	