



STATE OF GEORGIA
Children's Cabinet

Executive Children's Cabinet Meeting

September 9, 2021

Zoom Meeting

8 AM to 10 AM

MEETING MINUTES

Executive Cabinet Members: Amy Jacobs, Department of Early Care and Learning; Joy Hawkins, Governor's Office of Student Achievement; Tyrone Oliver, Department of Juvenile Justice; Gerlda Hines, Department of Human Services; Eric Johns, Council of Juvenile Court Judges; Judy Fitzgerald, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities; Chris Hempfling, Division of Family and Children Services; Caylee Noggle, Department of Community Health; Candace Broce, Division of Family and Children Services; Miranda Williams, Office of the Governor; Trey Bennett, Office of the Governor; Jay Neal; Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

Department of Early Care and Learning Staff: Liz Young, Quandra Collins

Carl Vinson Institute of Government Staff: David Tanner, Melinda Moore, Michael Moryc, Jana Woodiwiss

Public Guests:

No public guests attended the meeting.

Call to Order

At 8:04 am, Commissioner and Co-Chair Commissioner Amy Jacobs from the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Jacobs asked for a motion to accept the day's agenda. Commissioner Judy Fitzgerald from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities moved to accept, and Commissioner Gerlda Hines from the Department of Human Services seconded. The Executive Cabinet accepted the agenda unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Schedule

Commissioner Jacobs asked for a motion to accept the meeting schedule. Trey Bennett with the Office of the Governor moved to accept and Jay Neal with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council seconded. The Executive Cabinet accepted the agenda unanimously.

Welcome and Introductions

Children's Cabinet co-chairs Amy Jacobs and Joy Hawkins welcomed the Executive Cabinet. New member recognized included:

- Caylee Noggle, Department of Community Health

Commissioner Jacobs announced that the Cabinet will now be following guidelines provided by the Open Meetings Act. In future meetings, the Cabinet will be adopting bylaws for voting and quorums as a part of the act. More information about the Open Meetings Act can be found at:

<https://law.georgia.gov/documents/open-meetings-act>

GOSA Executive Director and Cabinet Co-Chair Joy Hawkins encouraged Cabinet members to visit the cabinet website. She additionally shared the cabinet's strengths of sharing best practices and knowledge.

Agency COVID Updates

- **DECAL:** Currently, 75% of DECAL staff is now home-based, which they have found may be a good way to recruit and retain employees. Safety precautions are still in place when home visits are required. Quality Rated process is now being done more online with technology support called SWIVEL to observe classrooms virtually.
- **DJJ:** Working diligently to get more youth vaccinated. Only 17 over 947 youth have tested positive and 52 out of 3,000 staff are home quarantined. Currently, 74% of DJJ staff are fully vaccinated. Detention and teaching staff is still a challenge. DJJ has implemented work from home options for employees at least 2 days per week. The court system is still utilizing video visitation. Although when children do need to go to court or to a new facility, they are being tested. There is also a noted dip in capacity of children in DJJ facilities.
- **DBHDD:** Currently, 75% of all DBHDD workers are supporting state hospitals and the remaining 25% are working out of headquarters or supporting community-based providers. Increasing the use of telehealth due to the pandemic has also proven to be a solution for rural populations and patients with transportation challenges. Patient capacity has been decreased due to limited capacity of child and adult crisis stabilization staff.
- **DCH:** Slight decrease in hospitalizations as of 9/8/21. Grady has stopped doing elective procedures. Staffing is still a challenge, DCH is continuing to recruit 2200 contract staff

positions around the state, roughly half filled. DCH has National Guard medically trained members deployed to LA and at the border. DCH has implemented vaccine incentives for staff and is in discussion regarding vaccine incentives for families enrolled in Medicaid. ICD codes have also been opened for vaccination counseling. COVID is expected to make another spike during flu and RSV season.

- **DHS:** DHS has seen a spike in the number of employees that have contracted COVID. There have been some nursing homes for the aging community closing, so APS workers cannot do visits with them. DFCS currently has 11,000 children in temporary or permanent custody. There is a tremendous effort being made to get children vaccinated. DFCS is working with parents and the court system to obtain vaccine consent. Child support workers are mainly working remotely.

Literacy Update

GOSA Executive Director and Cabinet Co-Chair Joy Hawkins provided an update on the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Council. Recommendations and next steps for the Council were also discussed.

The Georgia Literacy Coordinating council was created to support the Cabinet's Literacy goal around the improvement from birth-adult years and a two-gen approach. The Council includes agency representatives from DPH, USG, TCSG, DECAL, GA DOE, GOSA and representatives from other organizations including Get Georgia Reading, Voices for Georgia's Children, GEEARS, and Georgia Municipal Association.

Deliverables from the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Council to date include:

- A matrix showing literacy initiatives in GA (will be completed by the October Council meeting)
- SB 88's requirement for USG to offer literacy courses for new teachers
- Growing Readers partnership with Cox Campus
- Cox Campus modules being facilitated by GA DOE
- GGR Reading at home (partnership with GA DOE)
- Literacy Resources list on Georgia Children's cabinet website, <http://www.gachildrencabinet.org/Resources.aspx>

Input on Leadership Program

David Tanner with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government presented an update on the development of a 2Gen Leadership Program for agency leadership. Executive Cabinet members provided feedback and voiced their support for the 2Gen Leadership Program.

Discussion Item: Federal Funds

Cabinet members provided an update on how they are using their one-time federal funds.

- **DECAL**- stabilizing childcare, increasing access to childcare for families with low income, identifying sustainability measures.
- **DBHDD**: training investments in trauma informed care, transition aged youth, recruitment and retention efforts, pipeline investments, supporting special populations, shared DFCS staff person, FEP (first episode psychosis) interventions.

Public Comment Period (9:45 am)

No public guests attended the meeting.

Discussion Item: November Meeting Agenda

David Tanner with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government requested input on the November meeting agenda with the full Children’s Cabinet. The next meeting will be focused on the Cabinet’s Health goal.

Potential items for discussion include:

- Child mental health collaborative; sharing and identifying feedback from the collaborative
- Transitions, how children transition from 1 age group to another
- Individual responsibility for health and well-being
- Post-COVID stabilization of “normal” workflow
- Healthcare workforce
- Updates on Infant Toddler MH Taskforce

Vaccination update

Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Kathleen Toomey provided a written update for the Cabinet due to an emergency conflict.

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Jacobs and Executive Director Hawkins at 9:52am.

Approved Executive Children’s Cabinet and Children’s Cabinet Meeting Schedule 2022

Note: First Wednesday of each quarter / 8 am to 10 am

February 2, 2022 -Executive

* April 27, 2022 (fourth Wednesday) – Full Cabinet

June 1, 2022 - Executive

August 3, 2022 – Full Cabinet

October 5, 2022 - Executive

December 7, 2022 -Full Cabinet