



Georgia Department of Human Services

Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services

DFCS State Advisory Board Meeting

May 17, 2022

Teams Meeting

Board members present: Chair Belva Dorsey (R8), Vice Chair Shondeana Morris (R14), Secretary Meredith Holt (R13), Randel Hambrick (R3), Octavia Fugerson (R5), Nancy White (R6), Travis Niblett (R9), Tommy Hill (R10), Allyson Christianson (R12), JaNice VanNess (AL), Jennifer Shinpoch (AL), Susie Weller (AL), Virgil Costley (AL)

Board members absent: Dr. Fran Chastain (R2), Deke Copenhaver (R7), Laci Gillis Tippins (R11), Judy Manning (AL), Vacant (R1), Vacant (R4)

DHS staff: Craig Foster, Matt Krull, LaMarva Ivory, Ann Burris, Mary Havick, John Hallman, Sreeji Vijayan, Demetrius Taylor, Melissa Barwick, Takissia Davis, Danny Nuckolls, Latisha Flesher, Shay Thornton, Kelly Beasley, Rhonda Wheeler, Holly Campolong, Adam Dean, Kylie Winton, Emma McCullough, Bryan Horn, Chuck Inman, Emily Hatchett, Ramirez Evans, Chuck Inman, Sekema Harmon, Tina Murphy, Martha Whaley, Brandon Gomez, Jennifer Eaby, Kirk Chaney, Julie Walters, Dana Carroll, Larry Sloan, Kelvin Frazier, Mona Jackson, Giana Herndon, Chhay Kong, Lee Biggar, Jana Drinkard, Holly Vaeth, Robin Herron, Demetrius R. Taylor, Lon Roberts, Ashley Parham, Renita Jeffries, Johnanna Weathers, Carmen Callaway, Carla Fairley, Regina Quick, Wesley Merritt, Monica Cunningham, Chantel Evans, Trevor Yanken, Dawn Criss, Maureen Williams, Shannon Fields, Sunny Patel, NuTrelle Toodle, Shelia Dease-Dinkins

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- Welcome and Introductions, housekeeping, and roll call by Chair Dorsey. Meeting called to order at 10 a.m. Quorum met.
 - Motion to approve today's agenda. All in favor. Approved.
 - Motion to approve minutes from February 15, 2023 meeting. All in favor. Approved.

Presentation by Mary Havick, Deputy Commissioner, Child Welfare

- Child Welfare Overview
 - CW Data March 2023
 - Open Intakes: 4,115
 - Open Family Support Stages: 1,705
 - Open Investigations: 2,903
 - Open Family Preservation Stages: 2,801
 - Children in Family Preservation: 7,905
 - Foster Children/Youth in Custody on Last Day of Month in
 - 0-17: 10,832
 - 18-22: 643
 - Children Adopted by Month in February 2023: 95



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Q & A by John Hallman, Deputy Commissioner, OFI

- OFI Data was distributed to the Board prior to meeting for review.
- Deputy Commissioner Hallman stood for questions. Board Members posed none.

Legislative Update by Emma McCullough, Director, Governmental Affairs

- Legislative Session ended in March. The following bills relevant to DFCS passed:
 - House Bill 129- Extends TANF benefit eligibility to pregnant women.
 - House Bill 460- Provides right to legal counsel for children receiving extended youth services in DFCS care.
 - Senate Resolution 282- Creates Senate Study Committee on Foster Care and Adoption.
 - Senate Bill 131- Aligns the proper parties and notice requirements for permanent guardianships in Juvenile court with those provisions in TPR proceedings.
 - Senate Bill 133- Establishes a uniform process for DFCS to assume custody of children as a result of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) delinquency disposition orders and Child in Need of Services (CHINS) hearings.
 - Senate Bill 134- Proposes to add termination of parental rights proceedings to the types of actions in which a child is competent to testify without the administration of a formal oath and authorizes the use of medical reports in narrative form in dependency and TPR proceedings.
 - Senate Bill 216- Increases the maximum amount of time of respite for foster parents/children at the discretion of the Department.

Amended FY 2023 and FY 2024 Budget Report by Melissa Barwick, Assistant Deputy Commissioner & Deputy CFO

Division of Family and Children Services	<u>AFY 2023</u>	<u>FY 2024</u>
Current Budget (State Funds)	\$726,059,659	\$726,059,659
Statewide Adjustments (Common Changes)	-	\$16,732,963
Workload Adjustments	\$15,928,193	\$33,367,105
Other Adjustments	-	-
Total Adjustments	\$15,928,193	\$50,100,068



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Governor's Budget as Approved

\$741,987,582

\$776,159,727

Human Resources Report by Ann Burris, Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources

- DFCS Staff Headcount: Just under 7,000 resources.
- DFCS Turnover: 2.5% less than this time last year.
- Turnover of Social Services Specialists: 3.5% less than this time last year.
- Turnover of Social Services Specialist Supervisors: 1.5% less than this time last year.
- Child Welfare Vacancies: 373 positions vacant.
- Turnover of Economic Support Specialists: 4.0% less than this time last year.
- Turnover of Economic Support Specialist Supervisors: 2.5% higher than this time last year.
- OFI Vacancies: 551 Economic Support Specialist vacancies.
- Time to Offer: Around 65 days currently.
 - Goal is 60 days.
- Agency Actions: Career path enhancements for master's degree levels.
- Other opportunities:
 - 40- hour Annual Leave Conversion Payout.
 - OFI rehired retirees.
 - CWS rehired retirees.
- Engagement:
 - Paying attention to employee subgroups, employee recognition, conducting annual surveys, recognizing the challenges that come with the job.

DFCS Advisory Board Business and Action Items

- Bylaw Amendment Proposals tabled until the next meeting.

Advisory Board Committee Reports

- Regional Trends Committee- Discussion on hoteling: Recommendation of 2:1 ratio of staff to child be considered.
- OFI Committee looking for members.
- Community Relations Committee looking for members.



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Advisory Board Member Regional Reports

- R3 – Foster parent appreciation events in all counties have been great success; Employee appreciation in Paulding County went well and Career Advancement emails have been well received; 36 open positions in region- actively recruiting.
- R5 – Community partnerships are growing; Held appreciation luncheon for counties with lots of turnover; Regional teams have helped streamline some problem areas and improve outcomes.
- R9 – Search for permanent Regional Director is ongoing, appreciate the work of interim Director Shay Thornton; Receiving reports of users having trouble with Gateway for renewals.
- R10 – No vacancies in Region 10; New director has been doing great work and has team excited; Down to 17 cases per worker caseloads; Struggling with placements for higher need youth.
- R12 – Autism Initiative is progressing— 22 youth diagnosed with ASD as of 4/20/23 working with Dr. Z and team, meeting next week with those who did not get diagnosis for assistance with further resources; Promise 686/Care Portal launched in Chatham, looking for other opportunities to partner with faith community; all counties completed TBRI training.
- R13 – New quality assurance team completed targeted reviews of open child welfare records; Kinship assessment staff hiring to relieve burden on other teams; Increase in hoteling because of high needs children coming into system; Travel moratorium is a concern but will be reassessed with the new fiscal year on July 1.
- R14 – Retention of employees a concern, one proposed suggestion is retention bonus, also began providing more detailed job descriptions in interview process and increased training efforts; Courts have had a delay in processing adoptions.

- Closing remarks and parting words from Vice Chair Morris.
 - Question raised regarding Family Match Program Pilot. More information to follow to Board via email/next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.