

State Advisory Board Meeting

February 7, 2018

12 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Atlanta, Georgia

Members present: Chair Tina Bartleson, DeLaine Hunter, Emily Cole, Dr. Columbus Watkins, Barbara Sims, Belva Dorsey, Roger Bryant, Tommy Hill, Cathy Atkins, Meredith Holt, Cindy England, Dr. Michelle Zeanah

Members absent: Kathy Cooper, Octavia Fugerson, Rodney Griffin, Judy Manning, JaNice VanNess, Emily Brantley

Division staff: Jeff Lukich, Vivian Egan, Walter Jones, LaMarva Ivory

Other guests: Rachel Davidson

- Chair Bartleson: The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. Welcome and roll call as this was a telephone conference call. **There is a quorum.**
- Chair Bartleson: Please review today's agenda. Approval of agenda moved by Belva Dorsey and seconded by Dr. Zeanah.
- Chair Bartleson: Turned meeting over to Division Chief of Staff, Jeff Lukich for presentation of the Division's six legislative proposals for 2018:
 - * A proposal to protect foster parents' private information, including home address and telephone number, from public disclosure
 - * A proposal to extend foster care services to youth up to the age of 21, allowing DFCS to access federal revenues to fund those services
 - * A proposal to align state law with federal regulations for serving families who are members or who may be members of federally recognized Native American tribes
 - * A proposal to exempt DFCS from the requirement to undergo a competitive bidding process in the obtainment of services related to child protective services and foster care services
 - * A proposal to eliminate the burden to prove that a child would be harmed by long-term foster care in order to terminate parental rights
 - * A proposal to allow DFCS to access sealed adoption records, if approved by the Director or his/her designee, in order to investigate reports of maltreatment of adopted children and review agency practice following the death or serious injury of a child adopted from foster care.
- DFCS Legislative Director, Walter Jones provide an update on the status of the proposals and whether a Sponsor had been assigned. An updated listing will be sent electronically to all Board Members.

- Meredith Holt: Raised question about unsealing adoption records. General Counsel Vivian Egan responded that proposal is to allow only DFCS to have access for purpose of investigation by the Division
- Dr. Michelle Zeanah: Asked is it beneficial to have letters of support from the Board. Walter Jones responded that the Board can writ letters to their Legislators as individual citizens but not as a Board. Jeff Lukich added that Board Members can advocate for the Division and educate legislators as citizens.
- Meredith Holt: Questioned if there was any resistance to any of the proposals- especially the CB21 bill. Walter Jones replied that there was support for the concept of all proposals.
- Dr. Zeanah: Asked for an update on Adoption Bill -HB 159. Walter Jones reported that it was not a Division proposal and that it had passed and was on the way to the Governor
- Cindy England: Inquired about the Division's opinion of HB 159. Walter informed that the Division doesn't take an opinion. The Governor is the official voice.
- Chair Bartleson: Questioned if passage of Adoptions bill jeopardizes federal funding. Jeff Lukich responded not that we are aware of but stated he would advance the question to get an answer.
- Barbara Sims: Wanted clarification of whether the proposal for ICWA was already included in SB 131. Walter Jones explained that we are adding this to a SB 131 sponsored by Sen. Tillery.
- Chief of Staff Lukich shared the Budget proposal for the current fiscal year and FY19.
- Chair Bartleson's Update: Requested that LaMarva Ivory send the daily legislative update to all board members. Shared top comments received from individual discussions with members. Top comments were:
 - A desire to move from simply receiving information and reports to partnering more intentionally with the Division on items related to the protection of children and welfare/public assistance functions. I specifically heard a desire to help the Division to overcome barriers that negatively impact its ability to fully implement the BluePrint for Change.
 - A desire to become more aware of legislative/administrative items and to have more meaningful input and partnership with the Division on these topics.
 - A desire to help streamline and organize communications and work between our State and Regional Advisory Boards.

The desires reflect the purpose for which the Board was established. The Chair asked each member to expect to receive an email from her that will include the documents and outcomes from the November 2016 planning session. Members are to review and consider each document prior to the March meeting as they will be discussed. Also asked members to bring their calendars to March meeting so they can plan for the rest

of the year. Shared that Committee assignments may have changed in an attempt to have member serve on only one committee. New roster will be emailed to members. Committee chair person is to call a committee meeting prior to the next full Board meeting to consider its purpose and be prepared to present a list of 2-4 goals the committee will focus on for 2018. Meetings should comply with Open Records Act.

- DeLaine Hunter: Commented that she feels Board is on the same page with Chair Bartleson's comments.
- Chief of Staff Lukich commented he appreciated the Board and that the Division is available to assist them.
- Chair Bartleson adjourned the meeting at 12:42pm.