



## State Advisory Board Meeting

November 10, 2020

Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

**Board members present:** Chair Michelle Zeanah, Secretary DeLaine Hunter, Meredith Holt, Rodney Griffin, Emily Cole, Judy Manning, Shondeana Morris, Susie Weller, Nancy White, Tina Bartleson, V-Chair Belva Dorsey, Octavia Ferguson, Roger Bryant

**Board members absent:** Tommy Hill, Emily Brantley, JaNice VanNess, Barbara Sims

**Other attendees:** Fran Chastain, Anelia Moore, Dan Thrailkill, Helen Sloat, Ann Burriss

**DFCS staff:** Director Tom Rawlings, LaMarva Ivory, Jerrica Williams, Ramirez Evans, Kevin Harris, Chris Hempfling, Mary Havick, Carol Christopher, Jon Anderson, Denise Wells, Mary Beth Lukich, Ashley Parham, Chelsey Williams, Holly Campolong, Trevor Yanken, Kirk Cheney, Salena Perry, Glenene Lanier, Jennifer Brogdon, Shannon Fields, Danny Nuckolls, Chris Wright, Shay Thornton, James Binnicker, Rhona Wheeler, Marva Reed, Stacey Barfield, Susan Boatwright, Star Allen, Carmen Callaway, Kelly Beasley, Dawn Criss, Shelia Dease-Dinkins, LaCharn Dennard, Ambrea Henderson, Colleen Mousinho, Clifford O'Connor, Donna Pettigrew-Jackson, Tammy Reed, Kimberly Smith, Lon Roberts, Beulah Thumaty, Sabrina Watson, Kristen Toliver, Darrell Braswell

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- Welcome, housekeeping, and roll call by Chair Dr. Zeanah and LaMarva Ivory. Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m. Quorum met.
  - Motion to approve today's agenda. Moved by DeLaine Hunter and seconded by Shondeana Morris. All in favor. Approved.
  - Motion for approval of September 8, 2020 minutes. Moved by Roger Bryant and seconded by Susie Weller. All in favor. Approved.
  - Presentation by Director Rawlings, DFCS Division Director
    - Welcome everyone
    - Region 8 and Region 14 Roadshow recap
    - Virtual lobbies and the importance of building relationships with our community partners.
    - National Adoption Month Kick-Off
      - We are expecting an increase in the budget for adoption assistance for the SFY22 Budget

- Secret Santa 2020 – Virtual
  - 2021 Plans
    - Virtual lobbies have been successful and will continue
    - Returning to the office
    - 2021 Legislative Overview
  
- Presentation by Kevin Harris, Director of Legislative Affairs and Interim Communications Director
  - Legislative Update
    - Proposed changes in the budget; awaiting response from Governor’s office
    - Election updates concerning Georgia (updates/changes to the Senate and House)
    - DFCS Clean-up Bill: Update various definitions related to child abuse and neglect in O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5
    - Adoption Code Reform and Increased Tax Credit for Adoptions
    - Tuition Waivers – O.C.G.A. § 20-3-66
    - Further define who qualifies as a state employee under the Georgia Tort Claims Act.
    - Amend the identified statute to allow for the filing of a probate court guardianship petition prior to the child turning 18 years of age.
  
- Presentation by Mary Havick, Deputy Director of Child Welfare
  - Introduced Carmen Callaway Director of Wellbeing
    - Meeting the educational needs of youth in foster care
    - Common challenges youth in care face with the education system (timely enrollment, inappropriate classroom settings, etc.)
    - Educational Programming, Assessment and Consultation (EPAC)
    - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
    - Education Support Enhancements for 2020
  - Questions

- **Q. Does HB 855 mean students wont have to go to through the RTI process?** A. We are not sure yet. The legislation should help shorten the length of the process.
    - **Q. What will visits and investigations look like going forward?** A. We have issued guidance to case managers. Through the end of this year they will continue virtual visits and on December 1, they will receive guidance for January 2021.
- Presentation by Jon Anderson, Chief Deputy Director of OFI
  - SFY Historical Trends
  - SNAP Applications
  - Agency Response – COVID-19
  - PEBT Issuance
  - Application Timeliness – SNAP, TANF, Medicaid
- State Advisory Board Meeting end of the year Wrap-Up/Recap - **Dr. Zeanah**
- Board Member Regional Reports
  - R1 – Issues with the hiring process
    - Recently held regional advisory meeting
  - R3 – Recent regional advisory meeting; great participation
    - Foster parents are feeling disconnected with virtual setting. Counties created a welcome video for foster parents to help them feel connected
    - All counties in the region have exited more youth from foster care than have entered
  - R4 – Have been meeting virtually
    - Working on a project to help improve graduation rates for youth in foster care; Will connect with Carmen
  - R5 – Recently held regional board meeting
    - Survey was done for foster parents on virtual visiting
    - Working on incentive for case workers
    - Morale boosters; staff appreciation
    - Foster parent café monthly/virtually
  - R6 – Recently held regional board meeting; next one scheduled
  - R8 – Roadshow recap- Connection, Resiliency, Partnerships
  - R11 – October regional board meeting was cancelled
    - Issues with hiring process

- R12 – Board chair elected
  - Looking forward to working with Faith based communities and SOH sites
- R13 – Meeting regularly; well attended
  - Teleworking is going well for staff
  - Hiring process issues
- R14 – Roadshow recap
  - 2 Adoptions were finalized so far in DeKalb this month
  - Partnering with food banks and DeKalb CASA for a virtual event in December to support youth in care
- Board elections – All elected unanimously
  - Chair – Belva Dorsey
  - Vice Chair – DeLaine Hunter
  - Secretary – Shondeana Morris
- Closing remarks and parting words from Dr. Zeanah
- Closing remarks; Thank you to Dr. Z (**Belva Dorsey**)
- Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.