



State Advisory Board Meeting

July 14, 2020

Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

Board members present: Chair Michelle Zeanah, Vice-Chair Belva Dorsey, Secretary DeLaine Hunter, Tommy Hill, Barbara Sims, Meredith Holt, Rodney Griffin, Emily Cole, Judy Manning, Shondeana Morris, Susie Weller, Nancy White, Tina Bartleson, Emily Brantley, Octavia Ferguson

Board members absent: Roger Bryant, Janice VanNess,

Other attendees: Helen Sloat, Fran Chastain, Maggie Reeves, Michael Polacek, Japera Johnson Hemming

DFCS staff: Director Tom Rawlings, LaMarva Ivory, Jerrica Williams, Patrice Meadows, Ramirez Evans, Kevin Harris, Chris Hempfling, Mary Havick, Dahlia Bell-Brown, Darrell Braswell, Jon Anderson, Denise Wells, Mary Beth Lukich, Ashley Parham, Shelia Dease Dinkins, Chris Perlera, Chelsey Williams, Carla Fairley, Trevor Yanken, Salena Perry, Jeffery Brown, Shannon Fields, Lacharn Dennard, Marva Reed, Danny Nuckolls, Chris Wright, Kristen Tolliver

- Welcome, housekeeping, and roll call by Chair Dr. Zeanah. Meeting called to order at 10:02 a.m. Quorum met.
- Motion to approve today's agenda. Moved by Belva Dorsey and seconded by Tina Bartleson. All in favor. Approved.
- Motion for approval of May 12, 2020 minutes. Moved by Tina Bartleson and seconded by Shondeana Morris. All in favor. Approved.
- Presentation by Director Rawlings
 - National Reunification Month wrap up - June
 - Teens and Siblings Appreciation Month - July
 - COVID-19 updates
 - P-EBT distribution roll out in late July for families who have students who receive free and reduced lunch while in school
 - P-SNAP benefits released to eligible families

- OFI has been on top of timeliness and accuracy during the pandemic
- SNAP application has been simplified by BOTS to speed up the process
- We are still encouraging staff to telework because it is beneficial to staff and families. Work is still getting done and we are staying safe.
- We have encouraged staff to take advantage of our Employee Assistance Program and are encouraging self-care
- SFY 2021 Budget
 - Thankful for the minimized cuts
 - We did not have to furlough employees
 - We are able to keep all offices open
- Racial tensions and concerns
 - It is important that we continue to work towards building better lives without regard to race, country of origin, background or beliefs. Our communities are rapidly changing, and it is important to know how to communicate with the people around us – as DHS/DFCS employees and as Georgians – to promote balance, equality and growth.
 - The DFCS executive leadership team is currently exploring how best to have dialogue around issues of race and equity. I have also encouraged county and regional leaders to have conversations with their staff.
- C.A.F.E grand opening in Gwinnett
- Questions/Comments
 - Tina Bartleson: Thank you for taking time to address needs and concerns of staff
 - Susie Weller: Will teleworking continue to the end of 2020? **Yes, we encourage staff to plan to telework at least until the end of the calendar year.**
- Presentation by Chris Wright
 - Budget updates
 - Pleased with the work that was done this year
 - No furloughs or office closures
 - No reduction on Vacant Foster Care Support Services Positions

- No reduction to After School programs
 - Budget reductions total \$28, 926, 378
 - Contract Reductions/Elimination total \$5,897,760
- Presentation by Kevin Harris
 - Legislative Updates
 - Foster Care and Adoption Reform Proposal
 - Sharing information/Repeal of the Child Abuse Registry
 - Eligibility for Newly Enrolled Foster Care students
- Presentation by Jon Anderson
 - High level COVID-19 Updates
 - SNAP applications
 - Agency Response
 - SNAP Historical Issuance Trends
 - P-EBT
 - SNAP SFY historical issuance trends
 - SNAP Issuances- one-year baseline
 - Questions
 - Will schools notify families? **Yes. DOE and our partners will help us with notifying families.**
 - When will QA restart? **The end of the year. Every county has to be reviewed every three years.**
- Presentation by Mary Havick
 - Clark County and school system helped allow school computers' ability to access our OFI websites.
 - Assigned Intakes
 - GA DFCS Child Maltreatment Reports: All Calls, CY2018 to CY2020
 - Calls from Education and Child Care Sources – downward spike
 - Child Death Investigations CY2018 to CY2020
 - Foster Care Population
 - Steady decrease

- National Reunification Month wrap up – June
- Questions:
 - What about drug testing that could not be done? What are we doing to make sure parents are ready for their children? **Drug screening was suspended in March but we have allowed it to continue through private contracting vendors. Not in our offices.**
- Board member regional reports
 - Community relations committee-
 - Racial equity efforts
 - How are we having these conversations in our regions?
 - Region 4 has frequent virtual meetings for DFCS staff to address concerns
 - Region 1 developed a council and invites staff to join in dialogue
 - Region 14 is engaging staff in conversation
 - Belva shared about how we are being impacted by two pandemics - social and health
 - Tommy highlighted issues and concerns facing his area in Region 10
- Closing remarks by Dr. Zeanah
 - Next board meeting is September 8th– will be virtual
 - Several members' terms expiring. Please share any ideas regarding potential candidates for Board.
 - LaMarva will send info on Region 12 and Region 1 virtual roadshows
- Motion to adjourn at 12:28 p.m. by Tommy Hill. Seconded by T. Bartleson. All in favor.