**State Advisory Board Meeting**

March 12, 2019

2 Peachtree Street NW 19th floor, Atlanta, GA 30303

**Board members present:** Chair Tina Bartleson, Vice Chair Michelle Zeanah, Tommy Hill, Barbara Sims, Belva Dorsey, Meredith Holt, DeLaine Hunter, Rodney Griffin, Roger Bryant, Emily Brantley, Cathy Atkins (via phone), JaNice Van Ness (via phone), Kathy Cooper (via phone), Emily Cole (via phone)

**Board members absent:** Judy Manning

**Other attendees:** Wayne Drummond (GPHSA), Karen Starks (NASW Georgia), Kahlia Boyd (Intern with Dr. Z)

**DFCS staff:** Interim Director Tom Rawlings (via Skype), Jon Anderson, LaMarva Ivory, Ellen Brown, Ramirez Evans, Walter Jones, Lee Biggar, Chris Hempfling, Sekema Harmon, Tammy Reed, Carol Christopher, Chris Hempfling, Lindsey Ross, Lacharn Dennard

* Welcome by Chair Bartleson. Meeting called to order at 10:01 a.m. Quorum met.
* Motion to approve March 12, 2019 agenda. Seconded by Barbara Sims.
* Introductions by board members and attendees
* Approval of January 8, 2019 minutes. Moved by Tommy Hill, seconded by Delaine Hunter.
* Presentation by Director Rawlings
  + Introduction
    - National Social Work month
  + Overview of MOU signing
    - Working with minority communities
    - Community outreach efforts
  + Thematic priorities
    - Culture and climate
      * Reorganization and structure explanation
      * Ensure that staff at each level have a voice and that their feedback is incorporated
      * Advisory board member participation in “suggestion box” meetings with frontline staff. These meetings will serve to incorporate feedback to ensure policies are working efficiently and effectively.
    - Recruiting and Hiring
      * Update on hiring event last month
      * Approval to modify qualifications for social services positions
    - Building Community
      * State of Hope applications close on March 29th
      * Bolstering community services
    - Federal Reports and Kenny A
      * Have made incredible progress in our Kenny A lawsuit and Dir. Rawlings is hopeful we can exit in the near future
    - Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)
      * Implementing FFPSA and update from steering committee meeting
      * Working through questions associated with FFPSA
      * Preserving families and supporting extended families to keep children as close to home as possible
      * Working on a statement of work for review of foster care system
    - Data Integration
      * OFI timeliness doing well lately
      * Meeting this afternoon with DPH, upcoming meeting with DOE. Access to records that will better inform us on the front end of these situations
      * HB 197 – creates comprehensive data warehouse that would be housed at OPB. System would allow state agencies to aggregate and integrate data.
        + This would help us triage cases when we get calls to CICC
      * Homeschool bill – would give DFCS a heads up if parents don’t file removal paperwork with the school district and would allow us to put eyes on them.
  + Questions from the presentation
    - Delaine Hunter: preservation in family including extending family – is there any talk of that process and the length of that process (paperwork, etc.) being addressed? It is cumbersome. **Yes, we’ve got a bill that’s passed the House which would allow us to ask the court to not remove a child, but to do a rapid placement with a relative to avoid removing the child from the home. Intent is to keep child with a relative while DFCS works to streamline process of approving relatives (for voluntary or relative care). Working to get relatives child care services quickly. There is money in the budget to add staff to help with that process.**
    - Emily Brantley: comment on memo from February and was very impressed. Really understood the analogies.
    - Karen Starks (NASW): question about modifying qualifications for social work? **The state has approved that. We will share the actual document.**
* Brief introductions
* Legislative Updates – Walter Jones, Director of Legislative Affairs and Communications
  + New administration – Gov. Kemp has been very supportive of child welfare
  + Support for Tom Rawlings as director
  + Budget breakdown
  + Top legislative priority – SB 225 includes:
    - Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
    - Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)
    - Chafee vital records
    - Fair hearings
  + Overview of child welfare legislation by other legislators
  + Response to Effingham case – event on March 28th
* Board accomplishments to date – Chair Bartleson
  + Participation in community conversations
    - Will provide toolkits with board members, should have something to preview at next board meeting
    - Need assistance in bringing people to the table
  + Carol Christopher: concentrated staff engagement and board participation in focus groups
  + Meredith Holt: hiring and backfilling positions
  + Wrapping around regional boards to help provide guidance and structure
* Working lunch and true colors assessment
* Bylaw committee update by Barbara Sims
  + Would like to add another appointee
* Board member updates
  + Chair Bartleson: working through issues with regional board
  + Emily Brantley: working with community foundation on grants and needs for foster families. Tapping into community services – Georgia National Guard youth challenge foundation, would like to invite Dir. Rawlings to their annual gala.
  + Meredith Holt: had a regional advisory board meeting in region 13 after the first of the year. Turnaround time for hiring has gotten better. Gwinnett Co. DFCS employee was named employee of the year. Kudos to DFCS for their work during the Super Bowl re: human trafficking and assisting with child recovery.
  + Tommy Hill: home region was hit recently during the tornado. Trying to get the Grady county office up and running. Tremendous support from the state. Regions 8-12 had the largest showing during their training meeting.
  + Rodney Atkins: met with region and county directors earlier this year. Concerns still remain around hiring and we hope that those are corrected. Have a couple of county director openings, have trouble finding qualified applicants. Difficulty getting regional board up and running.
  + Roger Bryant: regional meetings include child welfare and OFI services. Child welfare subcommittee update – interested in knowing where most of our referrals come from. Relationships with the school systems are critical and need to be nurtured. Goal to strengthen relationships between school boards and DFCS offices. Need to develop a training for principals, counselors, etc.
    - Follow up from Keith Bostick: we are looking at classification of employees
  + Belva Dorsey: attend regional board training. Additional training needed for local county boards. Talbot county was hit by the tornados as well. New Region 8 director will be introduced at next county board meeting.
  + Barbara Sims: needs assistance accessing loca/regional board meeting schedules.
  + Delaine Hunter: working to get information about OFI out more regularly. Regional board has good attendance (county director and one board member from each county). In the process of coordinating local State of Hope sites in the region to collaborate. OFI committee meets monthly by conference call. Participated in OFI District meeting. OFI committee’s key goals.
  + Vice Chair Zeanah: working to get an article featuring Tom in the Georgia Pediatrics Journal. Positive feedback on DFCS at the legislature.
* LaMarva Ivory: the application closes on March 29th. We need to make sure all regions are represented, please help us spread the word. You will have a new badge at the next board meeting.
* Chair Bartleson: closing remarks
* Dahlia Bell-Brown: follow up on community foundations and using them to activate relationships with foundations around the state. Only four roadshows this year – Albany, Marietta/Lawrenceville, Gainesville and Dublin. Encourage you to attend and participate in those meetings.
* Roger Bryant: can an email go out with everyone’s contact information? List of committees
* Vice Chair Zeanah moves to end the meeting. Barbara Sims seconded. Meeting ends at 1:47 p.m.