

The Children's Cabinet

Monday, October 26, 2015

DOA Conference Room A

10:00 a.m. – 11:35

Meeting Minutes

Approved 12/3/2015

Members in Attendance: Secretary Roberts, Chair; Jamia McDonald, Michael DiBiase; Regina Costa; Ken Wagner; Melba DePena; and Scott Jensen. **Absent:** Governor Raimondo; Nicole Alexander Scott, MD; Maria Montanaro; Jim Purcell.

❖ Call to Order and Announcements:

Secretary Roberts called the meeting to order and announced that Dacia Read officially started as Policy Director of the Children's Cabinet on October 8th and that Governor Raimondo had asked Commissioner Ken Wagner as Vice Chair of the Children's Cabinet. Secretary Roberts applauded Commissioner Wagner's appointment as a very appropriate blending of public welfare and public education, and she looks forward to working together. Secretary Roberts stated that a number of the Cabinet members had demonstrated an interest that there be some input around housing and community development, and stated that she has asked the Director of Rhode Island Housing, Barbara Fields to join the Cabinet's meeting.

❖ Strategic Planning Updates and Timeline:

Secretary Roberts stated that with the re-establishment of the Children's Cabinet, Governor Raimondo has asked Cabinet to deliver a strategic plan and children's budget by December 1, 2015. The Secretary thanked Elizabeth Gaines from the Forum for Youth Investment for attending the meeting today and for her informative presentation at the September cabinet meeting. The Secretary stated that Elizabeth continues to provide valued technical assistance to the Cabinet's planning process, and thanked Casey Family Programs for their support of this level of expertise.

Secretary Roberts stated that the main focus of today's meeting would be the Children's Cabinet Strategic Plan. She informed the Cabinet that they would hear updates on the planning process and dive more deeply into discussion regarding strategies and improved outcomes for children and youth. Secretary Roberts asked Dacia Read to provide an update from the staff-level and community planning meetings.

❖ Updates from Staff-Level and Community Meeting:

Dacia Read informed the Cabinet that she had led a half-day planning meeting with staff from each agency and met individually with additional staff members from each agency since assuming her role as Policy Director of the Children's Cabinet two weeks prior. Dacia indicated that as a result of those conversations, she had been able to develop crosswalks with proposed desired outcomes and potential indicators. Dacia reported that she had also met with Kids Count, the Economic Progress Institute and the Rhode Island Innovation Policy Lab. She stated that their input has been helpful and she looks forward to meeting with other community partners.

❖ Strategic Planning Time Line

Dacia Read stated that the Cabinet has an ambitious timeline and informed the Cabinet that she plans to provide them with a draft Strategic Plan by November 6th. She requested that Cabinet members submit comments on the draft plan to her between November 6th and 13th. Dacia also announced that the draft plan would be posted for public comment between November 16 and November 20, and that an updated draft would be disseminated to Cabinet directors for final review on November 23rd. Dacia stated that the Cabinet would have an opportunity to finalize and vote on the plan at the next Children's Cabinet meeting.

❖ **Budget Time Line:**

Dacia Read stated that she has been reviewing and organizing a list of funding streams that included in FY16 budgets and FY17 budget requests, and will work with the Office of Management and Budget to collate a draft proposed FY17 Children’s Budget. She stated that she anticipated sending a draft of this document to the Cabinet by November 18th for their review.

❖ **The Cabinet’s Charge:**

Dacia Read stated that the statute authorizing the Children’s Cabinet calls for members to meet at least monthly to address all issues for children, especially those that cross departmental lines, and relate to children’s needs and services. She stated that in her meetings with agency staff, it’s clear that there a lot of interagency work groups working on a series of issues already. She stated that many are looking to share their findings and recommendations with the Cabinet to have some decisions made and get ready for implementation. Dacia mentioned that the unique value of the Children’s Cabinet is its capacity to build broader partnerships, set bigger goals, use better data and information and to implement bolder strategies. Dacia stated the Cabinet is also charged with producing an annual comprehensive children’s budget as well as the five year statewide plan and proposed budget for an integrated state child service system. The Cabinet is also charged with developing a strategic plan to coordinate and share data to foster interagency communications, increase efficiency of service delivery and to simultaneously protect children’s privacy and rights to confidentiality.

Dacia stated that with these statutory expectations in mind, she would next present a draft outline of Goals, Vision, Guiding Principles and Desired Outcomes for the Children’s Cabinet to consider as it develops a strategic plan.

Draft Goals – “What We Aim To do”

1. Improved the health, education, and well-being of children and families in Rhode Island;
2. Increase the efficiency and coordination of service delivery;
3. Improve the data-driven, evidence-based decision making using strengthened data sharing capacities among agencies and research partners while adequately protecting the privacy rights of children.

Dacia stated that when we think of a five year plan, we want to think of things we can do to work better together in sharing data, interagency agreements, improve services and have a more effective and efficient delivery of services and improve outcome for children moving forward.

Draft Vision – “Were We Want To Go”

- All Rhode Island children have an opportunity for safe, healthy and bright futures.

Draft Mission – “What Drives Us”

- We – the leaders and agencies serving children and families in Rhode Island – come together to ensure that our children and youth have opportunities for safe, healthy and bright futures. By providing the overarching leadership and holistic approach necessary to improve the well-being of our children and youth, we set our state on a path toward a more stable and successful future.

Draft Guiding Principles – “How We Work”

1. Leadership from the top – The Governor and her Cabinet Directors will ensure the success of the overall strategic and action plan;
2. Adequate cross-agency communications and coordination, key to eliminating the fragmentation of services due to the programmatic responsibilities of the agencies;

3. The State has a responsibility to provide adequate services and supports to children, including but not limited to health and mental health services, foster care, medical insurance, quality education, safe schools, communities and environments; and opportunities to engage civically and socially;
4. Improved data collection and sustained data sharing will help the State identify services needed, any gaps in services, and ultimately ensure children and families have access to the services they need to live a safe and healthy life;
5. Strong partnerships across agencies and with providers and community partners will help us to best support our children and youth and achieve our vision – collectively we will positively impact our families.
6. Public education campaigns will help raise awareness of the issues facing Rhode Island’s children and youth investment in addressing these issues.

Dacia asked the Cabinet if they had any comments or feedback.

Director Fields stated that in regard to number 3, she would like to see housing included, because “we need all those things mentioned but they require a place to be delivered to.”

Regina Costa stated that knowing that education and labor and training are here at the table, in reviewing the plan and all of the work that is outlined, she did not see a lot of reference on the parental education and vocation and she suggested that parents be included.

Dacia Read stated that was a great point and that she had received some community feedback on the importance of economics, housing, family, stability and there being supports for family and caregivers to access. Dacia stated that this could be discussed as fitting into the 5 year goals and outcomes for children and families identified in the strategic plan, and suggested that it could be the basis of a public education or public engagement campaign at some point.

Commissioner Wagner asked Dacia if when she mentioned the comprehensive children’s budget, she envisioned it as above and beyond the agency budgets or would the agencies submit an integrated comprehensive budget together.

Dacia Read stated that this would fit in the draft of the Strategic Plan, but the thought was to build the capacity over the next five years and to think about our children’s budget in a more integrated way. For this year, we were thinking of doing a survey and assessment of how we are spending across five desired outcomes for kids, and then allow this group to come back together in subsequent years to see where we want to put more investment or work toward more effective efficiencies. She suggested that as a long term goal of the group.

Elizabeth Gaines stated that she has seen a lot of states do a budget department by department accounting of what they are spending on children. She added: “The idea with this Cabinet is to start by analyzing your budgets in an integrated way by looking at the desired outcomes that you are driving toward. What are the various agencies spending on the various age groups, so you can see a larger picture of what the state is spending? Then ideally make a new budget together.”

Dacia Read stated we have an incredible resource in Elizabeth as she has worked with other states on this issue. Dacia asked the Cabinet if there were any further comments.

Secretary Roberts stated she would like to raise the bar of the Cabinet and expressed that she would like to see the word “adequate” in number two be removed and aim for a higher impact on better than adequate communication and coordination.

Dacia Read concurred with the Secretary and continued her presentation of the Draft Desired Outcomes stating that they will be guides on how we are investing and spending, as well as how members coordinate across agencies to make sure there are both population-level measures and monitoring over a series of time, as well as performance measures on our work together that is being measured to see where our progress is.

When we are thinking about Desired Outcomes over the next five years we are looking at the following, but not limited to as we can always add more.

Draft Desired Outcomes – “How Our Work Impacts R.I. Children”

1. Physically Healthy and Safe
2. Behaviorally Able and Emotionally Hopeful
3. Academically Empowered and Career Ready
4. Socially, Culturally and Civically Engaged
5. Supported by Stable Families and Communities

Dacia Read poised the following guiding questions in monitoring progress toward Desired Outcomes are:

- What are agencies currently doing in each of the five desired outcome areas?
- Which efforts are most central to facilitating desired outcomes for children?
- Which efforts can the Cabinet provide the most value to?
- Which efforts require the most cross-agency collaboration?
- Which measures are best positioned to measure progress in these areas?

Dacia stated that it will be important to identify valuable process indicators to monitor progress toward desired outcomes. In assessing indicators, Forum for Youth Investment suggests considering the data power, communications power, and proxy power of each indicator.

- Data Power:** is the data available on a timely basis for particular populations and is it reliable?
- Communications Power:** does the data speak clearly to a broad range of audiences
- Proxy Power:** does the data convey the most salient information about the phenomenon in question?

Dacia Read discussed the five desired outcomes and elaborated on each of the outcomes that were introduced to the Cabinet at the last meeting and as a result of her meetings with agency staff and community partners who have contributed to developing language.

Dacia shared crosswalks indicating current objectives for each outcome that are shared across agencies and areas that had the most overlap or need to intervention.

Physically Healthy and Safe – Objectives Across Agencies

	Early Childhood (0-8)	Middle Childhood (9-15)	Young Adulthood (16-24)
Physically Healthy and Safe Objectives Across Agencies	(1) Children live in safe living environments. (DCYF / OCA / EOHHS)		
	(2) Schools and childcare settings are healthy and safe. (RIDE / DOH / DHS)		
	(3) All children access adequate, affordable health insurance coverage. (DOH / EOHHS)		
	(4) Children are supported by adequate early health care. (DOH / DHS)	(5) Adolescents access adequate care and reproductive health resources. (DOH/BHDDH)	
	(6) All children receive needed immunizations on time. (DOH/EOHHS)		
	(7) Children receive coordinated physical health services across agencies. (EOHHS/DOH/BHDDH/RIDE)		
	(8) Child obesity is addressed through good nutrition and adequate physical activity. (DOH/EOHHS/DHS/RIDE)		
	(9) Children maintain good oral health. (DOH)		
	(10) Adolescents and young adults reduce substance use and abuse. (BHDDH / DOH /RIDE /DCYF)		

Director DiBiase stated that the presentation is excellent, but at some point strategies involve choices and eventually we will need to collaborate and decide which ones are more important.

Dacia Read concurred and stated that the metrics vary for each objective, for instance there are ten objectives in the Physically Health and Safe section that rose up as being cross agencies or were particularly important under that area, and it would be great to get feedback today from the perspective of the Cabinet members on what would be most central to getting children to being physically healthy and safe; and also where the most need is for cross agency work. Then the indicators listed can be narrowed to those that we think have the most data power and proxy power, and that are most useful for us. “We do not necessarily need to monitor all the measures listed because there are agencies that already doing the monitoring, and we know we can call on them at times for that information. But as a Cabinet we should stick to those objectives that we narrow down.”

Director DePena suggested that DCYF be added to Objective #2 since they do licensing for childcare providers which involves health and safety.

Mark Fields a member of the public, asked if Peer Groups could be added to the metrics.

Dacia Read stated that the Peer Groups may be reflected in the Socially, Culturally and Civically Engaged Objective.

Brenda Amodei from BHDDH inquired as to where Mentally Healthy fits, is it assumed it is in the Emotionally Hopeful objective? Brenda stated that she believes it needs to be stated among the objectives.

Dacia Read stated that when they were looking at the objectives from agencies related to mental health, we did put them under the Behaviorally Able and Emotionally Hopeful Objective, but we can revisit and discuss that further.

Dacia Read stated she would like to narrow some of the key objectives under this outcome, and asked the Cabinet as they review these objectives, to consider what is the most striking and what are the areas they want to focus on to improve outcomes in this area.

Elizabeth Gaines elaborated by stating that the Cabinet would act as the “closet organizer for the state on all of the objectives that they each have for children because they would not want to lose the opportunity with this public body to have a central place for those objectives to be organized. So if there were any objectives that came off the list, or isn’t prioritized doesn’t mean it would not be staying on the page ultimately, but that as Cabinet your second role beyond closet organizer is to innovate and find some areas that you can only work on together.”

Commissioner Wagner stated that in terms of centrality, if he were picking two objectives from the list, he would pick what encompasses the other that would be more of a foundation. Therefore, he would pick number one and number seven, as an example. However, when you look at the measures for number one, they don’t look as central as the objective aspires to be. “It looks like we have data in a very narrow way in the measure whereas the objective is very broad.”

Regina Costa stated that in terms of number one, you could add Department of Health in terms of the lead paint as well as RIDE. She stated that number one cuts across all of the agencies with respect to safe living environments for children.

Commissioner Wagner stated he would like to add crime statistics in regard to domestic violence.

Director Jensen asked whether they can develop new measures if they find that one or more are necessary.

Dacia Read responded that doing so would definitely be possible.

Secretary Roberts stated that in regard to number one, she's unsure that we have done a particularly good job thinking about those measures and how we would define it as a group, so having some engagement not just at the leadership level but with the community on what are we looking for there would be key to how do we define and measure it.

Commissioner Wagner suggested that the Cabinet come up with five or six things that are foundational at the objective level and brainstorm what an ideal measure of those objectives would look like to see how close we are to those ideals and whether it's acceptably close or have to come up with a different measure.

Director Fields stated that as an example for number one, children should live in a family situation where the family is not spending more than 30% of income on housing costs. There is a huge impact on nutrition and health. Director Fields stated that she agreed number one should also include crime statistics as it relates to safe outdoor environments as well as a safe indoor environment.

Director DiBiase stated that the question would be, which objective where we can make the most impact as a Cabinet and typically that would be where we have interdepartmental leverage where we have headroom to make progress. "We need to find things that we can organize around that would create value."

Secretary Roberts stated that number one would be one to talk about further as there is no coherent policy, whereas number four we have done amazing work there. We have an approach there that works well, but we want to be sure that we are maintaining and always improving it while trying to deal with issues that we have had difficulties working cross-departmentally.

Dacia Read stated that the comments from the Cabinet are incredibly helpful in trying to narrow down and respond to the request for what we are we currently measuring, what would we like to be measuring, and what can we do to see where we are with those things we would like to measure.

Commissioner Wagner added that there is also a broader question as to what are we measuring that doesn't inform any actionable purposes in our agencies and should we stop measuring.

Director McDonald concurred and stated that DCYF collects 6,300 different data points and she is not sure we need to collect all of those data points and she does not believe anyone has thought strategically as to which of those data points actually inform policy.

Director DiBiase pointed out that the metrics are mostly DCYF related which is a narrow segment of our children and suggested that we have to broaden that way we look at that.

Secretary Roberts asked if all the measures that are being looked at only collected in State government. And is it appropriate that it only comes from State government or could it also come from other sources.

Dacia Read stated that yes, the current data measures were collected in State government. The data that is listed are specific performance measures that the agencies are collecting right now. There might be other population data, census data, youth risk behavior surveys and/or other surveys that we want to ask our partners to contribute. Kids Count was really helpful to identifying some population level data points that we could look to that are distinct from these agency performance measures.

Secretary Roberts stated that in this set of definitions we are looking at the at-risk families and whether we are protecting them as opposed to social measures of safety and security in neighborhoods and appropriate housing and health of housing, for example the lead paint issues.

Director Fields stated that the cost of housing impacts the ability to pay for other things which is also a factor. Housing Works Rhode Island has some great data that they collect as an additional source to go to.

Secretary Roberts stated that we need to decide as a group whether we work from the outlined objectives list of 1 through 10 or whether we take the opportunity to develop some other objectives that deal with issues

that we are seeing or that our partners in the audience think need to be recognized here. I am not sure what our process is to do that.

Director DiBiase when you talk about number one, we are thinking more about the safety and security as opposed to the health area in regard to obesity, nutrition and physical activities.

Director Fields stated that those issues do crossover into number one, because if you don't live in a safe environment, you will not send your child out to play and get physical activity. Number one is the more overarching comprehensive objective.

Director DePena inquired as to whether any of the departments are measuring homelessness and poverty among the families.

Dacia Read stated that we have some great population level data on homelessness, and the percentage of children in different levels of poverty, but not necessarily reflected in the measures that were included in these objectives.

Director DePena stated that in reference to number eight, perhaps one of the metrics should have the number of children on WIC. We measure SNAP, but I think WIC should be a separate measure.

Director McDonald stated that looking at objective numbers 7, 8 and 10 those seem to be what most agencies are focused on in their own strategic plan. "To the Secretary's point as to what could be missing, if we pick different priorities that don't impact our agencies, should we then go back and be reflective on our own strategic plans to make sure we are setting our priorities consistent with the Cabinet. Because if we all decide number two is important, to Melba's point, DCYF has a licensing function, but it may not have been as prevalent in our strategic planning process, and I would like to rethink it to make sure it is elevated to what our collective thought is."

Director DePena added that as her Department measures SNAP, they do not measure the deeper metrics which are how many families, and asked how that affects the metrics being used.

Dacia Read stated that in our last outcome area of children supported by stable families it talked about that cash and food assistance programs supporting families in times of need, and that could be another place where we could capture access to those services and the population needing it would be a valuable measure to look at.

Regina Costa stated that in reference to number five, Adolescents access to adequate care, DCYF and RIDE should be included in that objective, as it also relates to their departments. Regina stated that she believes movement between those agencies were left out at the adolescent level.

Secretary Roberts stated that in reference to number five and ten, we often don't focus on the challenges of adolescents in the same way that we do in early childhood, and I feel we should think about that in the Education area in terms of this is where a lot of behavioral issues and substance abuse issues develop and I am not sure we have captured that appropriately. "The Secretary stated it is something for us to consider as we are looking at these outcomes."

Commissioner Wagner stated that RIDE plans on focusing significant energy on the experience of high schools, increasing personalization in high schools and measuring that through a school climate survey. "It seems like we have gone through the exercise building up from the strategic plans and I think that's a valuable piece of data to move forward, but it almost seems that this next step needs to start at the top, at the level of the five objectives, and set aspirational targets for each of those five objective levels and then reconcile."

Elizabeth Gaines informed the Cabinet that she has assisted other Children's Cabinets by going in with blank dashboards and have the Cabinet do that envisioning. To the Commissioner is on point, it is important to pull from the strategic plans and think with that information that you have and think about what you as a

Cabinet need to do with that information. You may need to think about where multiple agencies show up, how you are actually going to prioritize to work better together, have more alignment and how you approach that particular objective.

Director DePena stated that the process the departments are going through is identifying a baseline of where we are now, “but where do we want to be six or twelve months from now so that these targets are being met. All the departments have been working with the Office of Management and Budget plugging that information in a very intentional way so that we are moving forward.”

Commissioner Wagner stated that to contextualize this, at least in the Department of Education, the Strategic Plan isn’t representative of all the work that we are doing, it’s just representative of the priorities that we selected over a five year period. “There may be foundational work that just isn’t part of our Strategic Plan that is moving along but not necessarily need strategic engagement, but it may be absolutely crucial for monitoring for the Children’s Cabinet work.”

Dacia Read continued the presentation and moved the discussion to the Behaviorally Able and Emotionally Hopeful Objectives:

Behaviorally Able and Emotionally Hopeful – Objectives Across Agencies

	Early Childhood (0-8)	Middle Childhood (9-15)	Young Adulthood (16-24)
Behaviorally Able and Emotionally Hopeful Objectives Across Agencies	(1) Children experiencing mental and behavioral health concerns make successful transitions. (BHDDH/RIDE/DCYF/DOH/OCA)		
	(2) Children (ages 0-3) at risk of or experiencing toxic stress access behavioral health interventions. (DOH/DHS)	(3) Adolescents and young adults (ages 12-25) who are at risk of or currently experience mental health conditions access sufficient treatment and support services. (BHDDH)	
	(4) Children and youth receive adequate mental and behavioral health services across the life course. (EOHHS/BHDDH/DCYF/RIDE/DOH)		

Dacia Read informed the Cabinet that objectives numbers one and four have come up in the agency workgroups to specifically look at transitions and the availability of appropriate behavioral mental health services for young people at different age ranges. Specifically for adolescents there is a lot of work around what is the capacity of service providers to meet the needs of young people in those age ranges.

Director McDonald stated that objective number four seems to identify it, have it available, and then transition it. Director McDonald stated that in DCYF’s work there are things out there that we have not matched well or haven’t expanded where the need exists so we haven’t been strategic. Director McDonald suggested that the word adequate should be replaced with the word appropriate.

Director Fields mentioned the public health concern of children living in unsafe neighborhoods experience stress and toxic stress as to what is happening around them, and suggested that be added to these objectives.

Tina Spears of the RI Parent Information Network suggested that all the population of children be added to objective number two, not just the 0-3 age range, because all children and youth are at risk of experiencing toxic stress.

Dacia Read continued the presentation and moved the discussion to the Academically Empowered and Career Ready Objectives:

Academically Empowered and Career Ready – Objectives Across Agencies

Academically Empowered and Career Ready
Objectives Across Agencies

Early Childhood (0-8)	Middle Childhood (9-15)	Young Adulthood (16-24)
(1) Children’s early development is nurtured. (RIDE / DOH)		(4) Students complete high school college-ready. (RIDE / DCYF / OPC)
(2) Children access high-quality Early Learning and Developmental programs. (RIDE / DHS / BHDDH)		
(3) Students perform at grade-level. (RIDE / DOH)		
(5) Vulnerable children receive appropriate and equitable educational interventions and vocational supports. (RIDE / DCYF / BHDDH)		
		(6) Youth access and afford college. (RIDE / OPC)
	(7) Students are exposed to career pathways early. (RIDE / DLT)	
		(8) Young adults are “work ready.” (RIDE/DLT)



Director Jensen commented on objective number eight, stating “All of the measures listed are okay on the DLT perspective, but I don’t believe they are connected very well to demand as they are being collected right now in practice. DLT is working hard to change that and measure it much better, and he wanted to highlight that fact because there is no sense in getting anyone ready for a career that doesn’t exist.”

Commissioner Wagner added that these are among macro measures percent of a cohort that lands in a job and another percent of a cohort that lands in a credit bearing college course. We may want to couple that with early childhood indicators, to get to Director Jensen’s point, that’s the way of connecting them. That may require some data integration work, but we should do that work anyway. Commissioner Wagner stated that we have the cohort base progression into college which is something that the Data Hub people are going to launch this month. We will just need to separate the data by industry sector, employment and unemployment.

Secretary Roberts wanted to clarify that what is being discussed for objective eight is rather than stating college ready and work ready, it should state “Go to College - Get a Job”.

Director Jensen and Commissioner Wagner concurred stating it would be better to measure who went to college or who got a job.

Commissioner Wagner stated that there is a data source called National Student Clearing House that has enrollment persistence and completion information in most programs, so you can get within plus or minus 5 - 8 percent points of accurate data nationwide. We would just need to link, in a more robust way, and replicate that model wage data. “We do not know as much about career readiness.”

Director Jensen stated that staff at the Commerce Department are in the process of determining for the companies in the state where the potential workforce is coming from. “There are companies in the state that are having a hard time finding employees therefore we need to be micro-targeting the data sources.”

Regina Costa asked if there is a way to break that information down with the youth from poverty and in DCYF to separate out those populations so that we have a robust college to job readiness program.

Director Jensen stated: “We do need to break that down, because we need to know who that person is ultimately and what their circumstances are so that we can wrap our suite of services together and give that person the best support available.”

Commissioner Wagner stated that he is not confident in the education poverty data, as it is based primarily on the free and reduced priced lunch program, and because the federal government changed the rules to increase participation they allow the schools to become schoolwide free and reduced priced lunch, and he is concerned that the schools are accurately reporting at the student poverty level as opposed to classifying students at a schoolwide level. If that's the case, then we need to look at poverty from a separate data source like wage as opposed to assuming poverty as a proxy through the school lunch program records. We do some cross checks to get better data, but there is still concern.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant of Rhode Island Kids Count stated that Kids Count puts out the 100 percent of federal poverty measure as a clear line of what percentage of kids are living in poverty. With the free and reduced lunch program eligibility levels, we only present which groups of kids are in which percentage of poverty categories so that people can see the whole picture. "These poverty levels are based on wage and reported income. The data comes from the Census and not related to data from the free and reduced price lunch program."

Secretary Roberts stated that we need to figure out a different data source because we want to make sure that we are not over reporting good outcomes because we are not breaking down our populations effectively to see where we have struggles.

Secretary Roberts stated: "We have (data) on the graduation side, "where do you land" but in regard to children coming into the school system, we are quite vague." Is that intentional that we have a high quality experience in preschool as opposed to do we have a metric about where we are when we come in to first grade, or is that not as relevant as third grade reading for example. "If we are spending a lot of money and policy focus on early childhood, it seems that we should be looking at what we want to get for that. We are nurturing early development, but what does that mean and how do we want to make sure that the developmental screens is one of the measures here."

Dacia Read stated that we have the support of the Early Learning Council and workgroups across agencies that are working on issues related to early childhood, and will look deeper into what it means to be kindergarten ready.

Director McDonald asked if it's obvious that we are missing the middle section of 9-15 year old group in a lot of the metrics or is just how the system works. "Meaning when we talk about starting from the ground up and step back and look from the top down, DCYF has an absence of metrics in this area which may be correct. But secondly, that middle section, is that something that everyone is neglecting or the ones that are hitting it the appropriate agencies to do so."

Commissioner Wagner stated that typically the more detailed measures are at the beginning and the end.

Director Fields suggested that the Department of Health should be part of those metrics as well. And in regard to the 0-8 measure, is pre-natal care of the mother is factored in on the child learning well in the early years.

Regina Costa stated that truancy becomes a major issue in the 9-15 age group and that should be a measure.

Commissioner Wagner stated that RIDE has measures of chronic absenteeism that could be used in that regard.

Dacia Read continued the presentation and moved the discussion to the Socially, Culturally and Civically Engaged Objectives:

Socially, Culturally and Civically Engaged – Objectives Across Agencies

Socially, Culturally and Civically Engaged
Measures Across Agencies

<p>(1) Students are globally competent. (RIDE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of students enrolled in at least one world language course (RIDE TCS data) • # of students enrolled in dual language programs (RIDE data) • % of schools offering courses in civics (RIDE data) 	
<p>(2) Students support each other in school. (RIDE/DCYF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate of instances of bullying (RIDE statutory indicator) • Rate of arrests or juvenile referrals in school for fighting (RIDE measure) 	
	<p>(3) Children and adolescents avoid justice system involvement. (DCYF / RIDE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth at RITS and other juvenile placements (DCYF measure) • Rate of re-incarceration of youth (DCYF measure) • % of justice-involved youth active in community-based programming (DCYF measure) • Rate of youth recidivism (DCYF measure)
<p>(4) Children and youth utilize community-based programming and resources. (DLT / DOA / RIDE / DHS / DCYF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate utilization of DLT youth centers (DLT measure) • % of youth accessing summer employment (DLT measure) • % of youth participating in library programming (DOA measure) 	
	<p>(5) Youth and young adults are civically engaged through higher educational attainment and government internships. (OPC / DOA / DLT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of postsecondary attainment statewide (OPC measure) • % increase in attainment among Latino and Black populations (OPC measure) • # of Legislative Internship placements in agencies (DOA measure) • % of participation of interns in state-wide government internship curriculum. (DOA measure) • # of government-based internship opportunities (DLT measure)

Dacia Read stated that there weren't that many stated strategic plan goals in this area across agencies. For example number four, is somewhat of a goal for the Department of Labor and Training in accessing and utilization of the community based resources whether through one-stops or through the youth centers, but not squarely a DLT goal. Dacia stated that it is useful to hear from the Cabinet and partners on what these objectives and measures mean to them.

Secretary Roberts asked the partners in the audience that may have a broader mission as to whether there were any issues here that they may want to flag or add for the Cabinet to focus on.

Director Fields suggested adding a more robust after-school time planning such as access to sports and arts.

Director McDonald stated that DCYF has 28 percent of the population in group homes, and when they run away from the group home, we penalize the group home instead of understanding the 15 year old is running because they have no social interaction with their peers. "We are trying to think differently about our foster system how we are encouraging our providers to think about those activities as a natural state of the child's well-being."

Jill Beckwith of R.I. Kids Count stated that there are modules of questions that could be added to Survey Works, such as participation in school activity, religious connections and civic engagement.

Barbara Amodei of BHDDH also stated that there will be a survey though the Departments of Health, RIDE and BHDDH that will be implemented in the Spring of 2016 which will provide data on access to afterschool activity involving the communities.

Dr. Blythe Berger from the Department of Health stated that the Department has a strong focus on eliminating disparities and driven equity and a lot of the root of that is in the Socially, Culturally and Civically Engaged Objective.

Director Jensen stated that in regard to objective number four, it is good to know how many children and youth are utilizing the DLT youth programs. But if we go by the principle of we do and what we measure, it

doesn't tell us anything about whether it's enough, what the right programs are, if they are succeeding in these programs.

Director DePena reported that in terms of objective number four, she and Director Jensen have been talking about increasing access to summer employment in partnership with some organizations, but funding has become a problem, however, they are working together on resolving those issues that are preventing that. They feel strongly that access to summer employment for families under TANF that it is a very good approach to assist the youth and they will continue to work together to be sure the program works well.

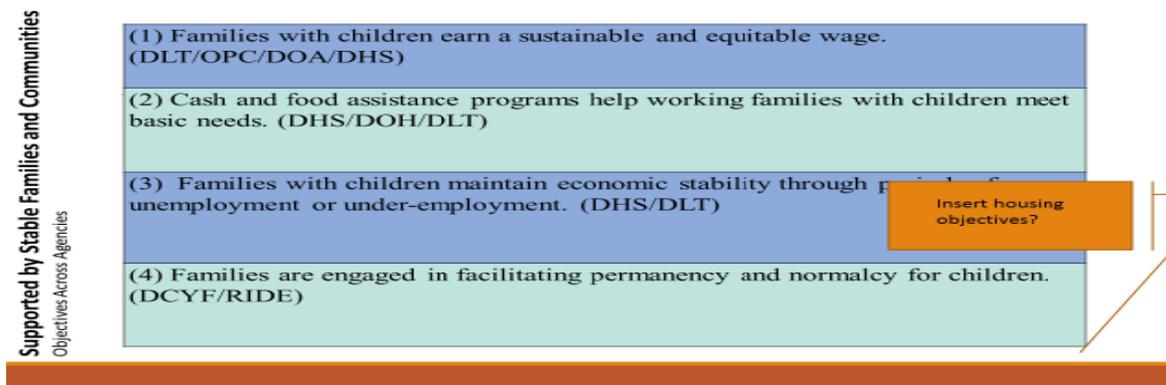
Regina Costa stated that the 9-15 year population is also the transition area for kids who are developmentally disabled and SED kids, and that is where the planning needs to start in the academic arena as well as DCYF. She urged that the population should be included in that objective and measure.

Dacia Read thanked Regina for bringing that issue up and stated that there was an urgent request for those working on the consent decree, RIDE, BHDDH, and DHS, who have been actively working on to utilize the Cabinet's time to think about how we can monitor progress in that area, specifically for transitions for kids with developmental disabilities and believe we are in a good position with this group to see some good focus in that area.

Darlene Allen from Adoption Rhode Island stated that when she thinks about the culturally engaged, she thinks about preventions and there is an over representation of children of color that are entering our welfare and justice system, and she would like to see how we can reduce that over representation and provide more culturally competent services.

Dacia Read continued the presentation and moved the discussion to the Supported by Stable Families and Communities Objectives.

Supported by Stable Families and Communities – Objectives Across Agencies



Dacia Read stated these objectives and measures were pulled from the Departmental Strategic Plans, and stated that with Director Fields' participation in the Children's Cabinet, perhaps she can assist in inserting some of the unique housing objectives if they fit here or talk about how they may fit in other places.

Director Jensen commented on objective number one, by stating that there are pockets in Rhode Island where unemployment is far worse than it is elsewhere and we need to figure out measures to focus on that.

Tina Spears stated that we have not had any attention in regard to the disparities in the overall objective and really reducing that, so perhaps somewhere in the mission that issue could be addressed, because each of these categories we know there's disparities among the populations. Tina stated that in schools minority children underperform, there are lower graduation rates, children living in poverty have lower employment, lower college readiness, and children with special healthcare needs have issues with the ability to be employed when they come out of school. The disparities are great in Rhode Island in terms of the education and economic well-being of our children.

Director Jensen stated that the OIC has put together a zip code map of the unemployment, and there are some zip codes in the state where we are at 40 percent unemployment, but the rate is around 5 percent statewide, so there is work to be done in those communities with the larger unemployment percentage.

Secretary Roberts stated that we may want to include the issue of disparities in our goals as it flows across all of the agencies because the characteristics of how we deal with those issues are different among each agency.

Commissioner Wagner stated that we need to highlight those inequities, but we should identify the gaps, as an opportunity gap, and add the high expectations with the proper supports.

Tina Spears stated that perhaps we not think exclusively towards college readiness as the only target, because there is a range of skills that we can build for our youth, as not all students want to move on to academia in a way that we have pursued in the years previous to now. We might want to think about innovation and targeting some of our work readiness programs as those are things our economy needs and that our youth would be more than willing and wanting to participate in those opportunities.

Mark Fields suggested that the Cabinet look at Davies Vocational School as a model.

Dacia Read discussed the next steps and informed the Cabinet that she will be scheduling one on one meetings with the Directors to discuss and review the dashboards.

Secretary Roberts stated that as Dacia will need the Cabinet's input, there will also be a process to get the public input that will be valuable to us as we move forward toward a final draft of the strategic plan. Secretary Roberts stated that the draft strategic plan will be available on November 16th for the public to review and comment and we welcome that.

❖ **Collaborative Initiatives Update:**

Secretary Roberts stated that as this group moves forward, it will be focused on the strategic plan and want to hear from partnerships and workgroups to do some triaging around priorities. She shared a vision for bringing the intractable problems to the group as we know they have simmered through multiple administrations particularly around interagency coordination.

Secretary Roberts added that the public-private working group that is working on an Early Learning Planning Grant provided to Rhode Island by the National Governor's Association would like to provide and update for us. Secretary Roberts welcomed Elizabeth Burke Bryant to give the update.

❖ **NGA Early Learning Planning Grant Update:**

Elizabeth Burke Bryant gave an update on the Rhode Island Early Learning Council Strategic Plan Update and the National Governor's Association Birth through 8 Early Care and Education Initiative. Elizabeth explained that after federal legislation requested that states establish state advisory councils on the Early Care and Education (ECE), the Early Learning Council was established by the Governor in 2010 as a public/private leadership table. The Council includes leadership from all the state agencies serving children and families birth through 8 years of age, ECE intermediaries and community leaders which meets quarterly with several working subcommittees on an ongoing basis.

Elizabeth indicated that because of how some of the federal grants have been written, having a ready public/private leadership table that has been an asset to some of the State's applications, such as the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge and the most recent application for preschool expansion. The Department of Health has done expansive work on access to home visiting, and what we are told when we apply for these grants, is that having this kinds of cross departmental Leadership Tables including community leaders has been a great way to show the kind of leadership we have in our state.

Elizabeth stated that when the Children’s Cabinet was re-established with its charge, she reached out to Secretary Roberts immediately about how the Early Learning Council looks forward to working with the Children’s Cabinet to complement its work as it could keep a deeper dive on the birth – 8 issues across state departments that can get quite complex, and feed that learning and findings and recommendations into the work of this body.

Elizabeth explained that the Early Learning Council established its Strategic Plan in 2012, with an overall purpose of having a high-quality system of early childhood care and education from birth to 8 years of age, from measuring outcomes and progress; expanding access to high-quality programs, developing and sustaining an effective early care and education workforce; improving early learning and child development outcomes and improving program quality. She shared that most recently, the NGA Center for Best Practices announced the opportunity for technical assistance to strengthen and implement a policy agenda related to expanding access and improving the quality of Early Care and Education (ECE) for children from early childhood through third grade. And, that Governor Raimondo applied for the assistance and Rhode Island is among five states that have been selected for the opportunity. The ECE includes: Child Care, State Pre-K, Early Intervention, Preschool Special Education, Head Start/Early Head Start, K-3 and home visiting. It is a broad look at the birth – 8 age group. Elizabeth shared that the goal of the NGA ECE comprehensive process is to coordinate with other key planning activities such as RIDE Strategic Plan, RTT-ELC Sustainability Plan, and the Children’s Cabinet and to identify and elevate Rhode Island policy priorities for early care and education from birth through third grade. Elizabeth stated that Governor Raimondo had asked the Early Learning Council to form an NGA planning team for the Technical Assistance Grant which came together a few months ago to look at some of the goals and objectives that are already in the RI Early Learning Council Strategic Plan and to determine some new goals and objectives that might be considered by the Directors, the Council, the Community as well as the Children’s Cabinet.

Secretary Roberts thanked Elizabeth Burke Bryant and Kids Count for the many different ways they are providing value into the work the Cabinet is doing. The Secretary asked the public if they had any questions or comments.

Richard Glucksman of Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI added that it is really helpful to think about what the goals are and the work that is happening in the community that is in support of those goals. Also to think about those that have the highest societal impact and costs, meaning someone with asthma that would have high treatment cost, impact school attendance, and possibly reflective of the parents housing and health.

❖ **Adoption of Minutes:**

Secretary Roberts asked if there were any amendments to be made to the minutes of September 28th. There were none. Secretary Roberts asked for a motion to adopt, Director Jenson made a motion to approve and Director DiBiase made a second motion. Secretary asked all those in favor of adopting the minutes, all were in favor, 0 opposed. Motion passed and minutes were adopted.

❖ **Adjournment:**

Secretary Roberts thanked everyone for attending the meeting and stated the next Children’s Cabinet meeting would be held the first week in December. Secretary Roberts stated that if anyone had any questions or items for Cabinet consideration in the interim, they may contact Dacia Read. Secretary Roberts asked for a motion to adjourn. Director McDonald made a motion to adjourn, Director Jenson seconded, all were in favor, 0 opposed. The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.