

The Children's Cabinet  
Monday March 26, 2018  
DOA Conference- Room A  
10:00am – 11:30am  
Meeting Minutes  
*Approved April 30, 2018*

**Cabinet Members in Attendance:**

- Commissioner Wagner
- Secretary Beane
- Director Boss
- Director Jensen
- Director Piccola
- Child Advocate Jennifer Griffith

**Commissioner Wagner** calls the meeting to order and asks for a motion to accept the minutes from the February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. The motion is seconded and the minutes are approved.

**Strategic Initiative Update:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Action Plan

Community Engagement for 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading – **Kirtley Fisher**, *Performance Management Executive, RI Department of Education*

- One of the strategies for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Action plan is community engagement, with a focus on emphasizing the importance of literacy
- For example, in March, Commissioner Wagner highlighted the work to date in the State of Education Address
- In April, there will be a celebration for Reading Week, including a proclamation from the Governor and visits to classrooms from the Governor's Cabinet
- RI Reads will also facilitate classroom visits – with a focus on infants and toddlers – at the end of April
- Over the summer, the focus will be on promoting summer reading

**Strategic Goals Presentation:** Physically Healthy & Safe and Supported by Stable Families & Communities.

DCYF Operational Plan Update – **Director Trista Piccola**, *Department of Children, Youth, and Families*

- Focus to date has been on the goals in the strategic plan
- DCYF is developing an operational plan that will focus more on prevention
- The department has a broad charge to support youth and families, including:
  - Child Protective Services
  - Community Services & Behavioral Health
  - Juvenile Justice

Initiatives in DCYF Operational Areas:

- *Child Protective Services:*

- Developing a new screening tool: the tool is being built into RICHIST system in order to prioritize information provided in calls to the hotline
- Ensuring that children are raised in families:
  - There has been an overuse of institutional care
  - One intervention has been the foster care recruitment weekend – 280 people from 170 families participated. This represents a potential alternative for licensing process moving forward.
- Measures of success:
  - Number of youth being diverted from institutional care
  - Reduction in the number of youth in institutional care
- Voluntary extension of care will be an important tenet of supporting youth in finding stability
- Questions:
  - What will the screening tool do? It will help prioritize information provided by the caller so that DCYF can make a decision about next steps.
  - When should someone call in to DCYF? If in doubt, make the call. People often worry about getting a family in trouble with the State. DCYF encourages people to make the call and let the department sort through the information with you.
- *Community services and behavioral health division*
  - Goal is to reestablish the community services and behavioral health division
  - Focus on developing the infrastructure to meet the statutory obligations and that all contracted services meet the needs of kids across the state
  - Create access to services outside of the child protective services front door
    - Instead of sending kids through the CPS front door, pause and assess family needs
    - If no maltreatment going on, DCYF will create pathway to make sure they have access to service array
    - At this point, 70 families have come through this alternative pathway. DCYF is tracking these youths separately to determine the impact of this new policy.
  - Change the policy around voluntary relinquishment
    - The state currently requires families to give up custody of the children if a family cannot afford services.
    - However, if a child had leukemia, the state would not require relinquishment, so the department is working towards parity on this issue and anticipates resolution this year.
    - Secretary Beane commented that this has been submitted as part of the 1115 waiver process, which is available online. The goal is to ensure that no parent is relinquishing custody of their child in order to receive services.
- *Juvenile Justice*
  - Goal is to prevent youth on probation going further into the juvenile justice system
  - Implementing a pre-detention assessment to determine if we are implementing all other potential supports
  - Juvenile Hearing Boards are one piece of a potential diversion and prevention network
  - Ensuring safety for staff and youth at the RI Training School

- Reopening the door for training and services at the RI Training School to support youth in staying connected to help them transition back to the community
- Reestablishing some family work so that families are ready once youth are released from the Training School
- DCYF is also looking at the effectiveness of the Training School in partnership with researchers at Brown University. This study will look at both near-term and long-term outcomes.

Infrastructure for the Department: Fundamental supports include staff and data

- Focusing on workforce development – diverse, well-trained, skilled and stable workforce who are engaged in their work and growing as professionals
  - Career Pathways -- front line staff and middle managers need to have professional development, career pathways, and more to continue to develop their practice.
  - Skill development – critical thinking and use of data are priority development areas
- Building the relationship with Rhode Island College
- Investing in organizational health
  - Making RICHIST a web-based system
  - Deploying mobile technology and wifi in all buildings
- Communications: Framing child safety as a public health issue
- Strengthening key partnerships, including internally to DCYF, with the Family Court, and Union Leadership
- Resources
  - Consider resources in context with the budgets of departments that help prevent families from coming to DCYF
  - Maximizing federal revenue opportunities
  - Continually evaluating services to investments are aligned with best outcomes. For example:
    - Active contract management
    - Applying the concept of active contract management to DCYF

Next Steps: The Pivot to Prevention

- Prevention outcomes
  - Reduce repeat maltreatment
  - Reduce maltreatment in foster care
  - Reduce recidivism in juvenile justice
  - Reduce hospitalizations
  - Diversion from institutional placements / state care
  - Other measures to consider: equity; opioid crisis
- Process
  - Feedback from a variety of sources
  - 2 strategy sessions with a smaller group of key stakeholders
  - Ongoing working group to develop the operational plan
- Operational plan will include 5 key areas:
  - Child and youth safety as a public health issue
  - Establishing a stronger network of prevention
  - Continuing to ensure competent, stable, diverse, and accountable workforce

- Fiscal soundness
- Effectiveness of services

Feedback from the Cabinet:

- Director Boss – Applauds the work that Director Piccola is doing and the focus on prevention.
- Director Hawkins – Emphasizes that it is important that we all support DCYF. Families go to DCYF likely because we in other departments have failed them along the way. Historically, DHS was doing great things to help families, but DHS discontinued them and now we want to bring them back. When families become involved or before they do, we do want to further destabilize them. We all need to own the outcomes for DCYF because we are all contributing to them.
- Commissioner Wagner – Thanks Director Piccola for her leadership.
- Secretary Beane – Commends Director Piccola and her team for their work on prevention.

**Secretary Beane** introduces Kim Paull, and comments that this presentation demonstrates a concrete way that other departments have committed to supporting the pivot to prevention by helping identify opportunities for earlier intervention.

Presentation on the EOHHS Ecosystem – *Kim Paull, Director of Data and Analytics at EOHHS*

- The Ecosystem is an integrated data system – and it demonstrates how the youth being discussed are not just DCYF’s responsibility, but all of our responsibility
- We have critical questions that are difficult to answer – and can drive better policy and implementation. For example: how do families with child maltreatment interact with the state before the instance of maltreatment?
- Much of data to answer critical questions currently sits within each agency, and despite intentions, too often we are more program-centric than family-centric
- Our problems are increasingly complex and we need the system that can support our decision-making
- An integrated data system focused on social services and housed within government has been implemented elsewhere, and its impact is clear:
  - Performance management help
  - Continuous improvement
  - Evidence-based decision making
- Ecosystem’s mission: use integrated data to develop programs to meet people where they are, help Rhode Islanders fulfill their potential, and responsibly steward State resources (time, money, staff)
- Principles for the Ecosystem:
  - Integrated data at person-level
  - Informs agency operations
  - State-owned and directed
  - Self-service analytics
  - Agency permissions & participation
  - Agile, project-focused
  - Builds on existing assets
  - Security best practices

- Development: build the data integration based on the question being asked, and grow iteratively as different questions are explored.
- Governance structure
  - Staffed by Kim Paull and staff internal to agencies
  - Executive Board for strategic program guidance, project review and approval
  - Data governance and security subgroup
    - Tactical questions about security and cleaning
    - Allows continual focus on accountability
  - Project Advisory Group
    - Meets weekly to inform the analysis and each other to make sure that the analysis makes sense and is focused on the operational question
- First EOHHS Project: Focus on Prevention
  - When did the state interact with families before they were DCYF involved?
  - Setting up a project governance team – regular system for asking questions, seeing the biggest context, driving the work forward
  - This is focused on the cross-agency work that work with ECE data and families
- Next steps for the Ecosystem
  - In long term, expand beyond EOHHS
  - Recruit power users and ambassadors
  - Build an Ecosystem community
  - Bring technology in house
  - Develop predictive analytic capacity
  - Consider other uses and applications

#### Feedback from the Cabinet:

- Director Jensen – Is the technology piece done internally?
  - Answer: It is an ongoing process, but we currently have a server and an interface. We are using integrated data but it is in version 1, question 1.
- Commissioner Wagner – RIDE is currently using Tableau, but Ecosystem is using PowerBI. The challenge will be making sure the data marts are able to feed into each other.
- Director Jensen – Can you describe more about case management?
  - Answer: We are not trying to do case management – real time, note-based or text-based data that will guide a case visit. This is more systems level.
  - Director Jensen mentions that a significant amount of time at DLT is spent entering information into the data system and filing papers. DLT is excited to work with Kim on this because it will significantly improve processes.

#### Community Questions:

- Kristin Stringfellow, RISSA – Appreciates the leadership that Director Piccola has brought to DCYF and thanks her for including educators as partners. Is there any consideration regarding the wraparound back to the school? Often, after making a call to DCYF, teachers do not hear what happened. If there is a way to share information back, it could further enable teachers and schools in being partners in supporting families. But often they don't hear back, is there a way for DCYF to wrap back to the school to be a partner in supporting the family. Who would hear back from DCYF?

- Director Piccola: We misunderstand confidentiality sometimes. In this case, we are talking about someone who is concerned who just wants to know the outcome. A teacher should be able to know what happened, not immediately but at some point.
- Superintendent Stringfellow encouraged Director Piccola to consider potential points of partnership with schools, and whether it should be with the superintendent or the teacher. They agreed to follow up to discuss further.

**Director Piccola** introduces the next set of presentations from the interagency working groups, and comments that there is a significant amount of work happening to support family-centered, interagency projects. This is a sampling to demonstrate the types of issues that are being addressed.

Interagency Working Groups:

Substance Exposed Newborn Task Force - Kristine Campagna, RIDOH

- SEN Task Force was reconvened by Governor Raimondo in 2016
- Interagency group includes a wide range of departments and partners
- Focused on four topics: alignment of hospital protocols, prenatal referral and care coordination, provider education, and establishment of peer recover coach program to support substance using mothers

DCYF and Training to Prevent Opioid Overdose – Kevin McKenna, DCYF

- DCYF wanted to help in tackling the opioid overdose epidemic
- Conversation among directors sparked action
- DCYF staff now can take an opioid overdose training that focuses on how to use Narcan, what to look out for, how to protect children, and how to support families

Family Home Visiting Program – Kristine Campagna, RIDOH

- Monthly cross-departmental meetings focus on how things are working and how to improve based on data
- For example: for children who touch child welfare system, through the CAPTA system, we look at referrals so we can see how we can catch children early on to help with intervention programs; all children are screened and, if applicable, referred to early intervention; implement training needs (such as Safe Sleep)

Whole Family Approach to Jobs – Director Courtney Hawkins, DHS

- We must address family economic sufficiency and have a family-centered approach
- The ACF, which funds TANF, has brought six states together to think about how we can collaborate. The initiative is known as “A Whole Family Approach to Jobs”
- Many Cabinet agencies are involved – DLT, OPC, RIDOH – as well as the General Assembly and community partners
- The goal is to identify the policies that we can move within our state to better serve families and what recommendations we would make to the federal government to support families
- Project will include a focus on special populations, such as DCYF involved families; families on RI Works; and young parents

- Leadership has challenged this group to bring forward data and stories about these families to dispel myths about poor families in Rhode Island
- Intention is that this group will report through Children's Cabinet

Public Comment:

Brother Michael Reis comments that he is a registered lobbyist. He says that the proposed budget is insufficient for children and families and that the state will continue to see children die without more funding. He is also concerned about what is happening in schools and that youth are being pushed out at 16 because they cannot navigate the system. Happy that the Children's Cabinet exists as a place for dialogue.

Commissioner Wagner comments that we have compulsory education through 18, but at 16, can go to an alternative education program with sign off from many partners. The costs stay with the school districts so that there is no incentive to move the students away. There should not be any other incentive but what is best for children.

Brother Michael Reis comments that youth and families do not know how to access this. When he engages with the most vulnerable kids, there is no one telling them about their rights.

Lisa Guillette comments that she is excited about the whole family approach. She says that Foster Forward won a discretionary grant from the ACF in 2011 to pilot and test youth workforce development called "Works Wonders." The data showed it has been an effective model and as a result, DLT has been continuing to fund this. She is looking forward to exploring further intersectionality to see if it could help families in RI Works. FF just learned that they will be receiving an additional grant soon.

Bill Hollinshead comments that this conversation is exactly what the Children's Cabinet was invented for. There is a gap in resources for behavioral health and mental health. It is important to look at the shallow end as well as the deep. Also, problems are very local and that should be kept in mind. Regarding the Ecosystem, we are one of the few states with a mature statewide health database.

Sarah Smith asks Director Piccola about youth involvement in the creation of the DCYF operational plan. Director Piccola notes that she has maintained a strong connection to the Voice and has met with the NE group.

Commissioner Wagner asks for a motion to adjourn. A motion is made and seconded. Commission Wagner adjourns the meeting and notes that the next meeting will be on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018.