

The Children's Cabinet
Wednesday June 27, 2018
Youth Pride Inc, 741 Westminster Ave, Providence, 02903
9:00am – 10:30am
Meeting Minutes
Approved July 26, 2018

Cabinet Members in Attendance:

- Secretary Beane
- Director Alexander-Scott
- Director Boss
- Director Piccola
- Commissioner Wagner

Secretary Beane called the meeting to order introduces the agenda for the day. Secretary Beane shared his personal background and journey in identity. He welcomed the audience to introduce themselves using gender pronouns. After the introductions, he thanked Elana Rosenberg and Youth Pride Inc for hosting the meeting and welcomed her to share more about the organization.

Elana Rosenberg, Executive Director for Youth Pride Inc, welcomed everyone to the space and shared Youth Pride Inc's mission. The mission of YPI is to meet the unique and varied needs of LGBTQ youth. Youth voice is very central to all that YPI does, such as having youth on the board. She invited everyone to stay after the meeting for a tour.

Preliminary Analysis of Gender Expression Data: 2017 RI High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS): Director Alexander-Scott, Rhode Island Department of Health

- **Director Alexander-Scott** grounded the conversation in recent data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)
- Director Alexander-Scott noted that surveys are important because they provide an opportunity for youth to share their voice and their experiences
- For the first time, YRBS collected information about gender expression and these are the preliminary findings.
 - Question from audience: why was the question collecting socially assigned gender expression, as opposed to self-assigned? Many students may know that they are not cis-gendered but may not be able to express their gender as something else while in HS. They would encourage RIDOH to include a self-identification question in the future.
 - Response: This question had been piloted in other parts of the country, following conversations with the community. RIDOH is open to feedback for the future iterations of the survey, as this was the first time the question was included.
- Key findings include:
 - **44%** of RI gender expansive high school students felt **sad or hopeless almost every day** for at least two weeks in the past year.
 - Compared to cisgender youth, gender expansive youth are:
 - **3 times** more likely to **miss school because they felt unsafe**.
 - **2.5 times** more likely to **attempt suicide**.
 - **2 times** more likely to be **bullied**.
 - More likely to **get poor grades**, ever use a **cigarette or marijuana**, or to have **taken prescription pain medication** without a doctor's permission.

- Next steps include
 - RIDOH is conducting additional analyses of 2017 YRBS data related to gender expression and aims to release more data later this year.
 - RIDOH is also working to standardize the collection of data on gender identity and sexual orientation across its health surveillance systems.

Rhode Island Department of Education: Guidance and Regulations to Support Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students – Rosemary Reilly-Chammat, RIDE

- RIDE has a long history of supporting transgender and gender nonconforming youth on campuses
- RIDE used data from national sources as there was not local data until recently
- Regulations Governing Protections for Students Rights to be Free from Discrimination on the Basis of Sex, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, or Gender Expression
 - Public Comment Period: 72 provided written comments (28 in support and 44 in opposition)
 - Public Hearing in February 2018: 40 attendees, with 31 testifying (20 in support and 11 in opposition)
- Commissioner's regulations were adopted in April 2018, and require a policy by July 2018
- Guidance Includes:
 - Gender Transition
 - Names and Pronouns
 - Privacy, Confidentiality, and Student Records
 - Dress Codes
 - Restrooms, Locker Rooms, and Changing Facilities
 - Physical Education Classes and Intramural and Interscholastic Athletic Activities
 - Other Gender-Based Activities, Rules, Policies, and Practices
 - Education and Training
 - Communications with School Community

Rhode Island Continuum of Care – Youth Homelessness in RI: Elizabeth Bioteau, RI Continuum of Care Planner, RI Housing

- Transgender youth and youth of LGBQ+ sexual orientation are disproportionately represented
 - 7% of youth nationwide
 - 40% of homeless youth nationwide
- Effective strategies to end youth homelessness must:
 - be developmentally appropriate
 - consider youth strengths and needs
 - meaningfully incorporate youth with lived experience focus on serving youth of color; transgender youth and youth of LGBQ+ sexual orientation
- RI CoC has been working actively on youth homeless in RI and has made significant progress
 - RICoC Unaccompanied Youth Committee (2017): conduct landscape scan & create a plan
 - Homeless Youth Point in Time (PIT) Count (July 2017 and May 2018)
 - Developmentally appropriate survey tool; incorporated strengths and needs assessment, meaningfully incorporated youth with lived experience in planning and implementation; particular focus on youth of color, transgender youth and youth of LGBQ+ sexual orientation

- 85 youth experiencing homelessness on July 26, 2017; 6% identified as transgender and 35% endorsed and LGBTQ+ sexual orientation (Pawtucket & Providence)
 - May 2018 Youth PIT (expanded to include Woonsocket, Newport, and Warwick) - data coming soon!
 - 2019 Youth PIT funding allocated
 - Youth centered Street Outreach with intentional focus on LGBTQ+ youth (Home to Hope; RICH)
 - 2 Youth Specific Permanent Housing Projects awarded in FY17 COC competition (Foster Forward; Community Care Alliance)
 - Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP)
 - Family Unification Program (FUP) application (DCYF; PHA Collaborative; RICoC)
 - RICOC's Statewide Coordinate Entry System began Youth specific housing prioritization using TAY-SPDAT (June 2018)
 - RICoC's UYC Vision to End Youth Homelessness and Outlined Community Plan drafted
- Challenges remain in supporting homeless youth in RI
 - No RICOC youth specific crisis housing
 - Lack of Runaway Homeless Youth (RHY) Basic Center provider – gateway to additional youth centered grants from the Family Youth Services Bureau (FYSB)
 - Cross-sector collaboration on program coordination and data sharing to support Department mandates that align with RICoC goals
 - Youth specific permanent housing subsidies do not meet need
 - Housing shortage is felt across sector – Housing is the Platform to Success
 - Unit shortage (2% vacancy rate in Providence)

Community Conversation – Elana Rosenberg:

- Elana Rosenberg facilitated a community conversation with the audience and asked what everyone might do within their organizations to support gender expansive, gender nonconforming, and transgender individuals
- Ideas included:
 - Create training for everyone in the organization about unconscious bias and methods to be more inclusive
 - Assess policies to ensure that they are gender inclusive. Examples include:
 - Insurance access
 - Welcoming and safe roommates in housing options
 - What are the barriers to access in health services?
 - Relationships and comfort with doctors
 - Training and accountability
 - Making it visible that providers support the community
 - Insurance coverage for hormones, surgery, and other supports
 - **Director Boss** noted that the departments overseeing these systems are responsible for monitoring and holding the providers accountable. She noted that we need to enforce these standards, have the right policies, make it clear how people can report issues, and then be ready to act. It is critically important to have youth voice represented at all levels. That is what BHDDH can do to ensure safety, access, and support.

Secretary Beane thanked everyone for joining the meeting and in particular the new voices in the room. He re-introduced Kayla Rosen, Children's Cabinet Director, in case anyone had feedback or questions. Kayla can be reached at kayla.rosen@ohhs.ri.gov.