



Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Meeting

Thursday, October 25, 2018
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. EST
Cabinet Meeting Room, The Capitol Lower Level
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301



Meeting Summary

Note: The following is a summary of the highlights of the proceedings and is not intended to be construed as a transcript. To obtain meeting materials, please visit www.flgov.com/childrens-cabinet.

I. Call to Order and Welcome

- Acting Chair, Alan Abramowitz gave a warm welcome to the Cabinet and meeting attendees and called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.
- The roll was called by Ms. Pat Smith and a quorum was confirmed.

i. FCYC Members in Attendance:

- Director, Alan Abramowitz
- Secretary Rebecca Kapusta
- Secretary Tim Niermann
- Berthy De La Rosa-Aponte
- Director Zack Gibson
- Judge Sandy Karlan
- Director Barbara Palmer
- Diana Ragbeer (via phone)
- Secretary Justin Senior
- Victoria Zepp
- Tanya Wilkins

ii. Members Absent:

- Chair Wansley Walters
- Senator Lauren Book
- Representative Gayle Harrell
- Superintendent Sam Himmel
- Director Rodney MacKinnon (Erin Smeltzer, Director, School Readiness Program, represented on his behalf)
- Justice Barbara Pariente (Jonathan Sjostorm, Chief Judge, Florida 2nd Judicial Circuit, represented on her behalf)
- Dr. Celeste Philip
- Commissioner Pam Stewart (Jacob Oliva represented on her behalf)

ii. Staff in Attendance:

Pat Smith

Proceedings

Additionally, Acting Chair Abramowitz took the opportunity to recognize and welcome the two newest members who were recently appointed by Governor Rick Scott, the Florida Department of Children and Families, Interim Secretary Rebecca Kapusta and Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Interim Secretary Tim Niermann.

II. Agency/Stakeholder Update on Hurricane Michael Relief Efforts

- Mike Watkins, CEO at Big Bend Community-Based Care(CBC), Inc., presented information on Post-Hurricane Michael response for Behavioral Health & Child Welfare recovery efforts in the Panhandle. Watkins emphasized the need for help and volunteers continue to be great. He highlighted the excellent collaboration exhibited by government and community leaders, service providers, emergency management, law enforcement, and healthcare professionals. He further stated that Big Bend CBC will serve in a critical recovery role, specifically in providing food, water, shelter, and temporarily child care services. However, Early education (0 to 5 years old) was one of the greatest concerns.
- Victoria Zepp, Cabinet member introduced Barbara Ammirati, Senior Advocacy Advisor at Save the Children who shared hurricane relief efforts regarding the partnership between the Florida Coalition for Children Foundation and the Save the Children US Foundation. The group has arranged warehouse space and is identifying the exact immediate supplies needed to assist hurricane survivors to help the community rebuild. Save the Children Foundation will work hand in hand, alongside the FCC, for at least two years.
- Samantha Was de Czege, Director of Child Care Services with the Florida Department of Children and Families highlighted DCF efforts and gave updates on the operational status of affected counties.
- Barbara Palmer, Director of Agency for Persons with Disabilities, suggested that the Cabinet post the Hurricane Emergency Tool Kit on the Cabinet website.

III. Policy Impact Committee Update

- Sandy Karlan, Chair of the Policy Impact Committee, instructed Cabinet members to review the Policy Report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation which was included in the meeting packet.

IV. Q Wunder: The Revolution in Social and Emotional Learning

- Sofia Dickens, founder of EQ Entertainment and the Q Wunder program, described the necessity of programs that emphasize social and emotional learning and emphasizing personal responsibility. Dickens shared information on 11 states that is currently implementing this program with various schools across the country. Dickens asked for support of the Cabinet regarding the Q Wunder program. Additionally, she would like Cabinet members to encourage school administrators in Florida to incorporate this program into their curriculum.

V. The 24th Annual Children's Week

- Liz Koehler, Director of Children's Week, shared information about the upcoming annual event and provided an overview of what to expect and new activities taking place

regarding the 2019 event. Children’s Week will be held March 24-29, 2019. Koehler will be accepting nominations and applications for the youth award from January 1 to February 22. Qualifying nominees will be youth or a child between the ages of 13 to 23 who have made an impact in their community. They encouraged everyone to visit the Children’s Week website to learn more about specific dates and events.

VI. Florida Office of Early Learning requested letter of support

- Erin Smeltzer, Director, School Readiness Program with the Office of Early Learning (OEL), spoke on behalf of Executive Director Rodney MacKinnon and informed the Cabinet that OEL was in the process of applying for a federal grant to address improvements in data-driven systems coordination, increase family access and engagement, and create a high-quality comprehensive early childhood education system. OEL was seeking the full support of Cabinet members regarding the grant application.

VII. Public Comment

- Mr. Brian Hickey, Director of the Florida Afterschool Network, addressed the Cabinet and shared information regarding the “Lights On Afterschool” initiative. The initiative launched in October 2000. Lights On Afterschool is the only nationwide event celebrating afterschool programs and their important role in the lives of children, families and communities. The effort has become a hallmark of the afterschool movement and generates media coverage across the country each year. Mr. Hickey thanked the Cabinet for the work it does and distributed a keep sake trinket with the organizations logo to all members present.

VIII. Sharing of Ideas

- All members took turns describing their time served as members of the Cabinet and giving their goodbye speeches.

IX. Closing

- Acting Chair Abramowitz proposed that the next FCYC Meeting will be held in Tallahassee on January 15, 2019. Members agreed without objection. Location, time and venue will be announced at a later date.

X. Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.