

Minutes
Senate Committee on Children and Youth and the House Committee on
Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs
Meeting Jointly
Tuesday, June 14, 2016

The Senate Committee on Children and Youth and the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs met jointly on Tuesday, June 14, 2016, at 9:30 a.m., at the State Capitol Building, Room 171, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Committee members present: **Senators** Stephanie Flowers, Chair; Bart Hester, Vice Chair; Linda Chesterfield, and Missy Irvin. **Representatives** George B. McGill, Chair, Charlene Fite, Vice Chair; Karilyn Brown, Vivian Flowers, Mickey Gates, Justin T. Harris, Bob Johnson, David Meeks, Rebecca Petty, Marcus E. Richmond, Laurie Rushing, Sue Scott, James Sturch, Dan Sullivan and Clarke Tucker.

Non-committee members present: **Representatives** Fredrick J. Love and John Walker.

Representative McGill called the meeting to order.

Consideration to Approve Minutes of January 29, 2016 [Exhibit C]

Representative Richmond made a motion to approve February 9, 2016 and March 7, 2016 meeting minutes and without objection the minutes were approved.

Arkansas State Police, Crimes Against Children Division (CACD), Oversight Report, October 2015 – December 2015 [EXHIBIT D]

Representative McGill recognized Major Ron Stayton, CACD who presented the “Oversight Report” for October 2015 – December 2015. Major Stayton stated that the report illustrates the compliance rates reported from the monthly Compliance Outcome Report (COR) published by the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The CACD is required to meet a minimum of 85% compliance in each Performance Indicator. (*See Exhibit D*)

In closing, Major Stayton noted the list of mandated reporter’s information for the quarter was left out in error. However, he stated that 8,793 reports were made to the hotline by mandated reporters, 4,769 were accepted for investigation and 669 were accepted for differential response.

Senator Flowers had concerns about “Dependency Neglect” cases and information collected on the cover sheets. Ms. Amber Briner, Attorney Ad Litem, Administrative Office of the Courts, stated that she would take this concern back to appropriate AOC staff for a response.

Representative Brown asked if another column can be added on page 7 showing the percentages of cases for each county compared to the total number of cases statewide.

Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Quarterly Performance Report, 2nd Quarter, SFY 2016, October 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015

[Exhibit E]

Representative McGill recognized Ms. Mischa Martin, DCFS, Interim Director to present the QPR. First, she noted that Cindy Gillespie, DHS, Director, has made some changes within the agency;

specifically pointing out that some of the divisions services such as: human resource, contracting, procurement and finance have been combined into service areas for the department rather than in each separate division.

Ms. Martin noted that a report being prepared by Hornsby-Zeller will provide insight into the increase in foster care numbers. It will assist in determining if courts/judges are influencing the increase. The results of this report will be shared with the committees.

(See Exhibit E)

Senator Flowers asked that DCFS provide a more detailed breakdown on “parent incarceration” for children entering into foster care. She also inquired about the dollar amount of subsidies to adoptive families. Ms. Martin mentioned that the state has an adoption subsidy law that regulates state adoption subsidies it closely mirrors the federal law. Senator Flowers asked if every state has that law. Ms. Martin replied, that is something she will have to report back to the committee.

Ms. Martin addressed Representative Brown concerns about statewide substance abuse and noted it is a contributing factor to the increase of children entering into foster care.

Arkansas Child Welfare Initiative: Improving Outcomes for Children and Families

[See Handout 1]

Representative McGill recognized Betty Guhman, Child Welfare Advisor, Governor Asa Hutchinson’s Office to present updates on the Child Welfare Oversight Panel. She discussed the “Vincent Report Recommendations of July 2015”. She explained the goals of the Oversight Panel and what has been done so far. Ms. Guhman applauded CACD and DCFS for all their hard work. *(See Handout 1)*

Senator Flowers stated that Department of Education needs to be involved in these discussions particularly as relates to dealing with kids with disabilities. She also suggested there needs to be more legislation focused on empowering parents and dealing with children with disabilities.

Nurses in the Schools [Exhibit G1 – G2]

Representative McGill recognized Paula Smith, State School Nurse Consultant, Arkansas Department of Health and Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). She acknowledges the efforts of Representative Andy Mayberry and Senator Joyce Elliott for sponsoring Act 414 in organizing the Public School Health Services Advisory Committee. In 2015, Representative Julie Mayberry was able to get legislation to continue the efforts of this committee. She gave a brief overview of a survey which provides a snapshot of some of the challenges that school nurses face on a daily basis.

(See Handout #2)

Senator Chesterfield asked about the school nurse ratio. Ms. Smith stated that legislation has an unfunded mandate of 1 nurse to 750 well students. Senator Chesterfield followed up asking is there a designated area set aside for school nurses and if not, can this be obtained. Ms. Smith responded stating that data collected within the survey, points out whether privacy is provided within a school setting. For the most part she noted that this is cost prohibitive. Senator Chesterfield asked whether or not school secretaries still assist with nurse’s duties. Ms. Smith replied, yes. According to the “Nurse Practice Act” they are considered unlicensed assistive personnel. Ms. Smith mentioned that in May, 2007 the State Board of Nursing updated their School Nurse Guidelines which outlines a three page

matrix indicating what licensed nurses are able to perform by law as well as what can be delegated to a Licensed Practical Nurse and unlicensed assistive personnel.

Representative McGill recognized Cory Biggs, Staff Attorney, ADE. He summarized the 2014-2015 Total Nursing Expenditures as reported in the Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN).
(See Exhibit G1)

Representative McGill recognized Betsy Kindall, School Based Mental Health Coordinator, ADE. She briefly summarized the Arkansas School-Based Mental Health Services & The School Nurse information. Arkansas has 27 funded schools based health centers in the state. These centers encompass full time mental health programs, medical services, dental and optometry services.
(See Exhibit G2)

Senator Chesterfield addressed the alarming number of suicides amongst children in Arkansas and the need to educate administrators on suicide awareness and prevention. Ms. Smith stated that ADE requires all employees to receive suicide prevention training.

Adjournment

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 12:14 p.m.