

VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH

December 5, 2017

1:00 p.m.

House Committee Room, W011
Ground Floor, Pocahontas Building

MINUTES

Attending:

Delegates Richard Anderson, Richard Bell, Daun Hester (by phone), Mark Keam, Christopher Peace

Senators William Carrico, Barbara Favola, Dave Marsden

Citizen members Karrie Delaney, Deirdre Goldsmith (by phone – not voting), Chris Rehak (by phone – not voting)

Not Attending:

Delegates Peter Farrell

Staff Attending

Amy Atkinson and Will Egen

I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Senator Barbara A. Favola, Chair

Senator Favola welcomed the Commission members and meeting participants and asked that the members introduce themselves. Sen. Favola then recognized outgoing Commission members, Karrie Delaney, Richard Anderson, Peter Farrell, and Daun Hester.

II. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Senator Favola turned over the gavel to Senator Marsden for the election of Chair. Delegate Richard Bell nominated Senator Favola for Chair. She was reelected unanimously. Next, Delegate Peace nominated Delegate Richard Bell for Vice Chair. He was elected unanimously.

III. Feasibility of Removing the Right of Appeal from Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court to Circuit Court in Certain Termination of Parental Rights Cases

Will Egen, Senior Legislative Analyst, Virginia Commission on Youth

Margaret Ivey Bacigal, Chair, Virginia Bar Association, Commission on the Needs of Children

Will Egen presented on this topic and the identified issues related to it. Mr. Egen then introduced Margaret Bacigal to present the Virginia Bar Association Commission on the Needs of Children's findings and recommendations. No action was taken on this topic by the Commission.

The presentation and report can be accessed on the Commission's webpage under the December 5 meeting tab.

IV. Decision Matrix

Amy M. Atkinson

- Reporting of Child Protective Service Cases to Virginia's Public Schools

Ms. Atkinson presented the decision matrix for Reporting of Child Protective Service Cases to Virginia's Public Schools.

After the presentation of the draft findings and recommendations the Commission heard public comment.

Public Comment

The following individuals offered oral public comment during the meeting on the Reporting of Child Protective Service Cases to Virginia's Public Schools recommendations:

- Donna Sayegh, brought up a suggestion of hers that grass roots efforts on these matters are important and that schools are too punitive.
- Kathy Burcher, Virginia Education Association, expressed concern on recommendations 3 and 5. She noted that for recommendation 3, the issue of meeting hearing deadlines is often attributed to Social Services and that teachers want a quick resolution of these matters.

The draft and adopted decision matrix can be found on the Commission's website under the December 5 meeting tab. The Commission on Youth approved the following recommendations:

Reporting of Child Protective Service Cases to Virginia's Public Schools

Recommendation 1

Amend § 63.2-1505(B)(7) of the Code of Virginia to require local departments of social services to report founded cases of child abuse and neglect of former school employees if they were an employee during the course of the investigation or at the time of the alleged conduct.

Recommendation 2

Amend § 63.2-1503(P) of the Code of Virginia to require local departments of social services to report founded cases of child abuse and neglect for an individual holding a license to the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the same time as a report is made to the local school board.

Recommendation 3

Amend § 63.2-1526 of the Code of Virginia to add language stating that an appellant may request no more than two extensions of the state administrative hearing unless compelling reasons exist, not to exceed an additional 90 days.

Recommendation 4

Request the Virginia Commission on Youth to study the difference in standards of review to determine a founded case of abuse and neglect between school personnel and non-school personnel and to advise the Commission of its findings and recommendations by December 1, 2018.

The following recommendation was not acted upon by the Commission:

Recommendation 5

Request the Superintendent of Public Instruction to post on the Virginia Department of Education's website the basis for adverse actions taken against Board of Education licenses. The posting of such information is requested for actions taken against licenses after February 1, 2018.

V. Safe Families

Patrick Neff, Patrick Henry Services, Director of Safe Families for Children

Patrick Neff presented on the Safe Families for Children pilot project. As a result of a 2015 Study of the Commission on Youth, the Department of Social Services was directed to establish a pilot program with Patrick Henry Family Services in Planning District 11 for the temporary placements of children in families in crisis and report its findings and recommendations. Mr. Neff presented data and a video testimonial on the program. He finally recommended to the Commission that Safe Families would like to move forward with legislation to implement statewide. The Commission did not make a recommendation on this suggestion.

The presentation can be found on the Commission's website under the December 5 meeting tab.

VI. Update on Activities of the Virginia Department of Social Services

Margaret Schultze, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Social Services

Carl E. Ayers, MSW, Director, Division of Family Services, Virginia Department of Social Services

Margaret Schultze began the presentation by giving an overview on DSS Family Services in what she called the Big Four Update. They were 1. Strengthen the Safety, Permanency and Well Being for all of Virginia's Children 2. Increase the availability of Safe, Quality Child Care 3. Transform Child Support Enforcement to a more Family-Centered Approach 4. Information Systems Modernization. Ms. Schultze then introduced Carl Ayers.

With respect to # 3 above, Senator Marsden expressed his desire that more or all of the juvenile courts use Virginia's Intensive Case Monitoring Program (ICMP).

Mr. Ayers then began to go over 4 specific topics with the Commission.

- Child and Family Services Review
The Child and Family Services Review is mandated by the Federal Government. Mr. Ayers went into detail about the state's strengths and weaknesses. One category in which Virginia is doing quite well is "children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs."
- Virginia's Three Branch Institute on Improving Child Safety and the Prevention of Child Fatalities
Mr. Ayers discussed the work of the Three Branch, recent legislation passed that support Virginia's work plan, Virginia's safe sleep campaign, and work force development. Delegate Peace noted that training for staff would be the best bang for buck to improve retention and quality.
- Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development
Mr. Ayers stated that Social Services received a 5 year grant to work on quality improvement.

- Safe Families for Children
Mr. Ayers shared DSS's two recommendations on the Safe Families Pilot Program:
Recommendation 1: A more rigorous evaluation of the Safe Families model's impact on children and families in crisis is needed to justify broader implementation of the program in other communities.

Recommendation 2: VDSS supports the enhancement of family-driven service models, like Safe Families, as a best practice in prevention. Thus, LDSS and other community-based organizations have the opportunity to work together as partners to strengthen the infrastructure and array of local prevention efforts.

The Commission did not act on these recommendations.

The presentation can be found on the Commission's website under the December 5 meeting tab.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:30PM.