

Louisiana State Bar Association Children's Law Committee

Wednesday, February 24, 2021 @ 12:00PM

Attendees:

- Trisha Casey, Mental Health Advocacy Service
- Pamela Crawford, Mental Health Advocacy Service
- Kristina Douglas, Shreveport City Attorney's Office
- Steven Farber, Metropolitan Human Services District
- Barbara Ferguson, Attorney at Law
- Caitlin Glass, Pelican Center & Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
- **Jesse George, The Pro Bono Project (co-chair)**
- Hon. Ernestine Gray, Orleans Parish Juvenile Court (ret)
- Karen Hallstrom, Attorney & Pelican Center Board Member
- Franchesca Hamilton-Acker, Acadiana Legal Service Corp
- Kellie Johnson, Mental Health Advocacy Service
- Guy Lain, LA Dept of Children and Family Services
- Barry LaCour, Mental Health Advocacy Service
- Hector Linares, Loyola University College of Law Youth Justice Clinic
- Rebecca May-Ricks, Mental Health Advocacy Service
- **Curtis Nelson, Louisiana Supreme Court (co-chair)**
- Michelle Perkins, Caddo Parish Juvenile Court
- Hon. Kathleen Richey, Casa
- Leigh Ann Sakla Rood, Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court
- Courtney Schroeder, 24th JDC Deputy Judicial Administrator
- Briana Spivey, Acadiana Legal Service Corp
- Mary Ann Swaim, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
- Ariel Test, LA Center for Children's Rights
- Cherrilynne Thomas, LA Dept of Children and Family Services
- Madalyn Wasilczuk, Louisiana State University
- Jacqueline Williams, Acadiana Legal Service Corp
- Jennifer Womble, Jefferson Parish Public Defender Office

Staff:

- Monte Mollere, LSBA
- Stephanie Beagh, LSBA

Guests:

- Chad Sanders, Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office
- Danielle Wright, Member of Orleans Parish District Attorney's Transition Team
- Rachel Gassert, Member of Orleans Parish District Attorney's Transition Team

Minutes

1. Welcome & Introductions

- All members welcomed and introduced themselves.
- Minutes – Ariel moved to approve the November 18, 2020 minutes from the last meeting. Jesse seconded. Minutes approved without objection.

2. COVID-19 & Winter Storm: New Issues & Updates – Since our last meeting, Louisiana continued to be impacted by COVID operations and, most recently, severe winter weather, which has impacted much of central and northern Louisiana. The Committee discussed issues and updates related to children’s law.

- Curtis had an update from the Juvenile Court Judicial Administrator in Caddo Parish. Youth and Detention were without power and water due to the winter weather, and they were required to bring in portable toilets and water tanks.
- Judge Richey explained that Casa volunteers and foster youth experienced power outages but nothing extraordinary.

3. Orleans Parish District Attorney Jason Williams’ Office –The Committee welcomed representatives from the Orleans Parish District Attorney Jason Williams’ Office and his transition team to discuss priorities mentioned during their “Disrupt the School to Prison Pipeline” Public Listening Session.

- Chad Sanders explain that part of DA Williams’ has a renewed focus on Youth Justice.
- Danielle explained that during the “Disrupt the School to Prison Pipeline” listening session, they listened to a variety of suggestions, including but not limited to the following:
 - Including youth voice & establishing a youth advisory council
 - Working with grassroots organizations
 - The effects of learning disabilities & emotional disturbances in academics
 - Juvenile life prevention
 - Data transparency, specifically of those with incarcerated parents
 - Untreated mental health diagnosis
 - More services for impact of loss of parent
 - Funding for early intervention & support services
 - Reallocating funding for SROs to mental health support
 - Elevated support of restorative justice practices
 - Explaining training and professional development
 - Accountability & public input
 - Chicago police department example—need to check in with a child after something traumatic has taken place
 - Reexamining parole eligibility for prior juvenile life plea agreements
 - Making resources for kids in the system available to kids not in the system

- Transition Team drafting robust report that is forthcoming.
- Madalyn Wasilczuk shared an article on COVID in youth jails and prisons: <https://arizonastatelawjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Wasilczuk-Final.pdf>
- Any other requests regarding the transition can be sent to info@runwithjason.com or if you have specific policy questions for the Orleans DA, you can contact that office directly at (504) 822-2414.
- Louisiana's truancy numbers available at: <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/school-system-attributes>

4. Children's Law Awards

- Pro Bono and Children's Law Awards Ceremony is currently scheduled for May 25th. This Committee is responsible for voting on the Children's law nominees. We are having a meeting next Wed., March 3rd at noon to discuss nominees. Voting will be circulated via a Survey Monkey survey.

5. Working Groups

- Trauma Informed Care - Karen and Kellie explained that they are working through CJA to master the terminology and get statewide consensus on "trauma informed" work. Dr. Hebert is working on a Trauma 101 training. The hope is that they can bring the training to this Committee to get it out to lawyers and judges and other legal stakeholders.
- Education– Barbara Ferguson gave the following update: The group continued ongoing discussions of what interventions during school years could assist in reducing arrests of children and youth. We reviewed funding sources for the most vulnerable youth and discussed the trauma focused initiative. Those participating expressed concerns for our youth. We discussed the IAIP (Individual Academic Improvement Plan), which each LEA is required to develop for a 3rd or 4th grade student who scored below basic in two core subjects. While the IEP (Individualized Education Program) requires a program for special needs children and youth, the IAIP pertains to all children and youth. Each member of the Workgroup has a vast array of knowledge on the subject of at-risk and marginalize children and youth, along with numerous intervention strategies. Our lengthy discussion included ideas and concerns from other groups of which each is a member.
- Legislative
 - Karen explained that the Children's "cleanup" bill, which was filed but pulled due to COVID, has been filed this session and is Senate Bill 9. It deals mainly with mainly CINC issues. There is also a domestic violence bill but waiting to see how it is going to be put together with the adult domestic violence act from Law Institute.

- House Bill 4 (DuBuisson) is a new bill regarding juvenile possession of a handgun.
 - There is also an Education bill for mandatory Kindergarten and age 5+.
 - DCFC might be bring some Federal Improvement Plan legislation. The Children's Code Committee meeting and will know more after that.
 - Discussion about Duplessis' bill from last session regarding waiving fees and costs in juvenile court proceedings. The bill may be reintroduced this session.
 - Task Force working on indigent defense funding, which could be most impactful to this Committee. Hector updated that the goal for the groups is make recommendations on how to change the funding system to rely on steady income streams. The Task Force is looking at other states. Next meeting is March 12th. The Task Force was created through Senate Resolution 20 from the 1st First Extraordinary Session 2020 filed by Senator Regina Ashford Barrow, who also chairs the group.
- Disparities & Disproportionalities Working Group – No current update.
6. Pelican Center Report – *Caitlin Glass* informed members that Louisiana Child In Need of Care Judicial Benchbook is coming out soon and will be available on clarola.org. This was a project of the Court Improvement Program of the Louisiana Supreme Court, Louisiana Judicial College, and the Pelican Center. It is a very comprehensive guide on each proceeding and is available to everyone. There are order templates, best practice, lists, links, etc. Orientation will be on upcoming.
 7. The Children's Law Committee Website – We've been working on updating the website (<https://www.lsba.org/ChildrensLaw/>) content to make it more usable for members. This is a resource for members, so we need the committee's help with what content you want/need. Two (2) sections need updating and we'd like members help: **News & Events** section (at the bottom of the home page & historically, this was for things the committee and members were working on) & **Online Resources Links** section. Please email me if you have any content you would like to add. Also, give update on the Becoming an Adult Brochure
 8. Engaging Law Students – We are always seeking to involve and educate law students on the work we do. Engaging law students helps promote the vast work of the members of this committee and can provide potential for future collaboration. Margot Hammond & Kellie Johnson are providing a interview skills training at Tulane Law School in March.
 9. Training – Committee members shared the following upcoming training opportunities:

- Pro bono Project's SJI training on March 19, 9am to noon: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/special-immigrant-juvenile-status-representing-juvenile-immigrants-cle-tickets-143333068065>
- On CLARO:
 - How to Support Healthy Relationships for Family Members, Caregivers and Professionals of People with Intellectual Disabilities, March 12, 2021 ((09:00 am) - (11:30 am))
 - Workshop for People with Intellectual Disabilities - Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships - What's the Difference? This training is for People with Intellectual Disabilities or Self Advocates
March 12, 2021 ((12:30 pm) - (02:30 pm))
 - Culture S.M.A.R.T. March 22, 2021 (10:00 am) - March 23, 2021 (01:00 pm)
 - Safety: Continuous Quality Assessment in Child Welfare Cases through Child Welfare Assessment & Decision-Making, April 19, 2021 (09:00 am) - April 20, 2021 (12:15 pm)
 - Fundamentals of Child Welfare, May 10, 2021 (10:00 am) - May 11, 2021 (01:30 pm)

10. Other Business – Committee members discussed other business:

- Madalyn Wasilczuk shared an article on COVID in youth jails and prisons: <https://arizonastatelawjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Wasilczuk-Final.pdf>
- Hector Linares mentioned the article regarding Madalyn's work regarding police using canines on juveniles: <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2021/02/12/the-city-where-police-unleash-dogs-on-black-teens>
- https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/courts/article_3b49142c-6c00-11eb-8c80-cb7c38691f19.html

11. Adjournment – Next meeting is May 19, 2021 at noon.