

LSBA Children's Law Committee
May 17, 2017
Louisiana Bar Center

In Attendance:

Danika Benjamin, Legal Aid of North Louisiana
Ayanna Butler, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
Kathy Cook, Mental Health Advocacy Services
Jacqueline Gilds, Attorney at Law
Franchesca Hamilton-Acker, Acadiana Legal Services
Margot Hammond, Mental Health Advocacy Services
Jack Harrison, East Baton Rouge Indigent Defender
Hope Hughes, 24th Judicial District Court
Martha Maher, Attorney at Law
Thailund Porter-Green, The Pelican Center
Ariel Test, Louisiana Center for Children's Rights
Cherrilynne Washington Thomas, Orleans Parish District Attorney
Jennifer Womble, Jefferson Parish Indigent Defender Board

LSBA Staff

Michael Schachtman

Guests:

Richard Pittman, Louisiana Public Defender Board (Director of Juvenile Defender Services)
Dayna Ryan, LSBA Leadership Class
Claire Popovich, LSBA Leadership Class
Brandee Ketchum, LSBA Leadership Class

1. House of Delegates Resolution

The committee has submitted a resolution to the LSBA that would convert the committee from "ad-hoc" to "standing" status. The resolution will be presented at the LSBA Annual Meeting in June. Thank you to Karen Hallstrom and Jacqueline Gilds for crafting the verbiage of the resolution.

2. Approval of January 11, 2017 minutes

April Test moved to approve the minutes, Jennifer Womble seconded, and the minutes were approved.

3. "Special Ed 101"

Last fall, the committee co-sponsored an event on the rights of students with special needs, and the corresponding obligations of public schools. Speakers included attorneys from the Southern Poverty Law Center, Department of Education, school boards' private counsel, and a representative from the Special Educators' Association. The event was for attorneys, students, and families. The committee voted to repeat the event in 2017 as well as work with the LSBA Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities Committee to create a "Know Your Rights" brochure for students and families.

4. Bar Journal Article

Committee members were asked to submit article ideas for the LSBA Bar Journal to Karen Hallstrom and/or Michael Schachtman. Once a list is compiled, the committee will ask the LSBA Editorial Board as to whether an entire themed journal is appropriate, or a series of individual articles. Potential topics include the Child Protection Representation Commission, safety decision making, and mandatory reporting. Article suggestions can be submitted in outline format or simply a brief description.

5. Law School Outreach

Committee members were invited to speak at Louisiana law schools about their careers. Both Loyola University College of Law and Southern University Law Center have dates available on Tuesdays and Thursdays in September 2017. The Loyola session will be two days: one on delinquency and one on CINC. Michael Schachtman will follow up by email with exact dates.

6. Child Protection Representation Commission

The committee discussed potential ways to support the ongoing work of this commission. Members identified the initial step of contacting relevant agencies (LSC, MHAS, OPD) to gather statistics on the need for additional conflict attorneys and curatorships. Committee members also discussed the need to address ancillary legal issues of young people including trusts, SSI, tort claims, etc.

7. Legislative Action

Prior to the meeting, Karen Hallstrom provided a cursory overview of “2017 Louisiana Legislation Impacting Children and Courts Exercising Juvenile Jurisdiction.” Committee members should contact Karen with any additions. If the committee would like to offer official comment on pending legislation, it must send a request to the LSBA Legislation Committee. Please contact Karen and/or Michael as soon as possible if you would like the committee to consider this.

8. Children’s Law Award

The 2017 winner of the LSBA Children’s Law Award is Tenée Felix of the Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights. Karen will present the award to her on behalf of the committee at the Supreme Court on May 23, 2017. Also of note, committee member and former chair Franchesca Hamilton-Acker will receive a “Career Public Interest Award.”

9. “Becoming an Adult”

The brochure and website are complete. View the mobile friendly website at <https://www.lsba.org/ChildrensLaw/ComingOfAge.aspx>. The URL is likely to change to something shorter and more user-friendly. The resource is now “live,” but committee members are still invited to submit information for the “services and resources” section.

10. Training Opportunities

All committee members’ names will be submitted to CLARO for inclusion on automated emails listing training opportunities. Additionally, the Pelican Center is offering

registration scholarships for _____, available to attorneys that are CWLS certified.

11. Adjournment