

Louisiana State Bar Association Children's Law Committee

Wednesday, February 16, at 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86183591653?pwd=cFhLRjd5bEJxM0M4YVArMktHSityQT09>

Meeting ID: 861 8359 1653

Passcode: 606904

Attendees:

- **Curtis Nelson, Louisiana Supreme Court – Co-Chair**
- **Kellie Johnson, Mental Health Advocacy Service -Co-Chair**
- Barbara Ferguson, Attorney at Law
- Barry Lacour, Mental Health Advocacy Service
- Sowmya, Mandava, 24th Judicial District Court
- Cherrilynne Thomas, Department of Children and Family Services
- Mark Harris, Pelican Center
- Alexandra Kamp, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
- Jennipher Williams, Mental Health Advocacy Service
- Allison Zimmer, La. Center for Children's Rights
- Parris Taylor, Louisiana Department of Education
- Josephine Vanderhorst, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
- Rachel Nastasi, Acadiana Legal Services Corporation
- Rebecca May-Ricks, Mental Health Advocacy Service
- Kathleen Richey – CASA
- Jack Harris, East Baton Rouge Indigent Defender
- Mary Ann McGrath Swaim, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services

LSBA Staff:

- Monte Mollere – LSBA Access to Justice Program Director
- Mariarenee Contreras – LSBA Access to Justice Projects Counsel
- Stephanie Beagh – LSBA Access to Justice Projects Counsel

MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome & Introductions: -

- a. 11/10/2021 – Minutes Approval

Members were asked to place their names and organizations in the chat box for their introductions. Members were also asked to review the Committee's 11.10.21 Meeting Minutes. Minutes were moved by Mark Harris. Minutes were seconded by Sowmya Mandava. Minutes approved.

2. Working Groups: (5 minutes for each workgroup to report.)

- a. **Trauma Informed Care Working Group:**

Kellie J. - provided a brief update about the workgroup's work since the last committee meeting. Members discuss about the intersection of the group's work and the bar journal

planning group's goals this year. Many of the articles this year will focus on the recent Trauma-Informed changes in the state of Louisiana. The group will also be working along CJA to help organize a general catalog of Trauma Informed practitioners and providers across the state. The group also discussed the possibility of leading trainings and creating resources that could be included in the general catalog. The group is still strategizing many of these initiatives but will meet again next month to discuss next steps. Josephine provided that the meeting went well and helped to show that many members are working on similar projects in their respective jurisdiction. This will help move future projects forward and create statewide initiatives.

b. **Education Working Group**

Barbara F. - provided that the workgroup will be meeting with Dr. Myrialis King to discuss a potential bar journal article regarding the work that she has done to integrate trauma informed disciplinary policies. The article will be based on the recent Trauma Informed Legislation that was passed in the State. This goes along with the work the workgroup has been researching on the different disciplinary policies that have been adopted across Orleans parish schools. Trauma informed policies have proved to reduce the number of school expulsions. However, due to mandatory quotas, schools often find ways to expel students to produce high academic performance scores.

Orleans parish is the only parish that has Type 5 Charter schools, and therefore not all the parish's schools were required to report their school suspensions and expulsions to the designated hearing officer. Things have changed since the implementation of the Type 5 Charter system, but there are still some schools falling behind from upholding these requirements. With the research the workgroup has done, they will now move on to exploring the discipline policies used in other school districts. Additionally, the workgroup will be looking at the data intake that's been recorded for juvenile arrests across the State. This data is harder to find but will help identify trends to help target the problems in school procedures. There are alternatives to school discipline proceedings that Type 4 and 5 charter schools can adopt to help reduce the number of expulsions and keep children in school. Again, the Education workgroup is meant only to study issues, but is not here to make any recommendations or policy changes.

Curtis N. provided more information about the bar journal and the federal Juvenile Justice Reform Implementation (JJRI) Act which requires for certain data to be collected when minors are placed in adult facilities. The local JJRI commission is meeting again soon in March, Curtis will share the invite once he receives it. The commission is currently researching the procedures taking place for minor placed in state custody. There was concern regarding a group of minors who were placed in a facility in St. Martinville parish and were not receiving any educational services. Curtis spoke with Bill Summers from OJJ, and he informed Curtis that they are in the process of hiring a new education director for OJJ. The person who was recently in the central office has retired. In regard to the

workgroup's bar journal article, the group will be drafting an article that touches on the recent TBRI/ACEs training schoolteachers and personnel are required to take.

Allison Z. clarified a question that was placed in the chat box. The children that were in an OJJ facility in St. Martinville. These children were the one's classified as having behavioral problems in their previous facility and were forced to be relocated to a more appropriate setting. The children were not receiving education services in their new location for several months since August when the facility officially opened. LCCR had send an administrative complaint to OJJ when the situation had been revealed to them and were able to come into an agreement for education services to be reinstated for these children.

c. **Legislative Working Group:**

No updates, but the workgroup is still recruiting members. The workgroup will be meeting in the next month. Kathleen R. said she was interested in joining the workgroup.

d. **Disparities & Disproportionalities Working Group**

No updates, but the workgroup is still recruiting members. They will be meeting soon. This workgroup is meant to look at the whole system as a whole in terms of addressing issues such as delinquency status offenders and child welfare.

3. Children's Law Bar Journal – Update

- a. If you are interested in participating with the planning group, please contact Mariarenee, Curtis, or Kellie.

The Children's Law special edition bar journal will be moving forward for the August/September fall edition. All drafts are due May 6th for the Editorial Board's review, but they have allowed the Committee to take lead on all the topics proposed.

Curtis N. asked Kathleen R. if she can discuss her article idea on CASA. Kathleen has been interviewing CASA attorneys and the article will talk about the value of volunteering and the opportunity for attorneys to serve as CASA volunteers. Marie C. will reach out to the planning group and any additional members for a follow up planning meeting.

4. Pelican Center Report

Mark H. - provided an update for the Pelican Center. They are actively involved in developing trial skills building training. This will be a specialized training program using court improvement resources that is designed to provide specific Louisiana training around litigation. The nuts and bolts of all the elements involved with all the child proceedings. The Pelican center is partnering with the American Bar Association's Children in the Law to prepare and design the curriculum. This is the first time that the ABA has co-developed a training and therefore, the Court Improvement Program will then own the curriculum and will be able to replicate it over time. The Pelican center is nearing the completion of the curriculum and the case scenarios, the plan is for the ABA folks, and Pelican Center to recruit lawyers who are interested in serving as faculty to produce this

training on an ongoing basis. Though the initial planning is to identify about 30 attorneys who are interested as ongoing faculty of the program and there will be a training the trainer session that will take place in early October, possibly the 7th. Then there will be another program in early December, possibly the 9th that will be fully open to everyone. This training will be led by both the ABA and the Pelican Center's chosen faculty to help reinforce the train the trainer experience.

Many of our Committee members are aware of the CIP Café seminars and the similar work that is ongoing, but the Train the Trainer program is the latest project. Josephine V. provided that Judge Turner is offering his courtroom in Gonzalez for future training events. Curtis updated the Committee, that the Pelican center is looking at doing the first training at the Nursing School located by Our Lady of the Lake because a couple of classrooms to conduce some brake out sessions.

Mark H. added that CIP is also in the cue to send attorneys to 3 of the National Child Welfare conferences. Not all the attorneys will be able to go to all 3 conferences, but one of the conferences is for Child-Parent Representation which is put by the ABA in Washington D.C. in early April. There is also an ABA conference on Children and the Law which is occurring the same week. The third conference is by the National Association for Council for Children which will be held in August. Michelle Breaux is assisting those attorneys who have signed up to go to one of these conferences. The purpose of funding these trainings is to continue attorney exposure to these national conferences and trainings that provide the latest legal information/thinking and innovations available for CINC issues. If anyone is interested, please contact the Pelican Center's staff or Marie C.

5. Engaging Law Students

a. LSU Apprenticeship Week on January 5, 2022 – Brief Recap

Curtis provided the Committee a brief update on the Committee's participation in LSU's apprenticeship week. The Committee collaborated with both the Language Access and Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities committees to conduct a client interviewing skills training. Curtis and Kellie were able to share about the Committee's work and planned a client interviewing exercise focused on working with children.

b. Trauma Informed Care Training for Law Students

The Committee has talked previously about conducting TBRI trainings for law students and we would love to hear from members who have gone through the TBRI training in the past for the possibility of leading these law skills trainings for law students. If anyone is interested, please contact Curtis N. or Marie C.

6. Events & Highlights:

a. Justice Fridays Fall Series – Brief Recap

The Committee gave a special shoutout to Victor Jones for volunteering his time with the LSBA's Justice Fridays Fall Series. Victor conducted a training on the rights of children with disabilities in public schools, focusing on IEPs and 504 plans. The training was well attended and received.

- b. *The Committee gave a special shoutout to Josephine V. for huge accomplishment on becoming a National Child Welfare Specialist.*
- c. 2022 LSBA Criminal Justice Virtual Summit on Mental Health
 - i. **Date:** March 10th at Noon-4:30 P.M & March 11th at 8:30 AM-12:30 PM
 - ii. **Event Description:** This is a free event hosted by the LSBA Criminal Justice Committee. Judges, court staff, attorneys, law enforcement and correctional officers, mental health professionals, and criminal justice stakeholders and advocates are encouraged to attend. Both days will include interactive workshops. Special guest speaker: Dr. Xavier Amador from the LEAP Institute.
 - 1. Summit Agenda Link: [2022CJSummitAgenda.pdf \(lsba.org\)](#)

Marie C. provided a quick summary about the Criminal Justice Summit as well. The summit will include one Ethics and one Professionalism training this year. Additionally, special guests, Judge Reese, Judge Zaunbrecher, and Judge Childress will be attending the Summit. This year the summit is focused on the intersectionality of the criminal justice system and our State's mental health services. There will not be any information on the State's juvenile system, but the goal of this year's summit is to identify members of the children's law practice area who could also speak on these topics for future collaboration and initiatives amongst both the Criminal Justice Committee and the Children's Law Committee.

Monte M. provided that the Criminal Justice Summit planning committee is looking for CEU accreditation for Mental Health professionals and was hoping to see if anyone in the Children's Law Committee is familiar with this process. Kathleen R. offered to help provide some information since CASA has done this before for their own trainings. She has worked with the NASW and the Psychiatrist/Psychologist group, but the process is tedious.

- d. **Human Trafficking of Youth in Louisiana** with the Pelican Center's CIP
 - i. Thursday, February 17th at 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.
 - ii. Registration Link: [Team Dynamics LLC - February 2022 Monthly CIP Cafe' - Louisiana Court Improvement Program \(teamdynamicsweb.com\)](#)
- e. ABA Featured Article: [The Little Agency that Could: Louisiana's Mental health Advocacy Service by Rebecca May-Ricks and Kathy Lynn Cook.](#)

Kelly J. shared that the article is about Mental Health Advocacy Service (MHAS) and the work that they do. If anyone is interested in reading, please do so.

7. Children's Law Awards – Nominations

- a. Committee Discussion of Nominees
- b. Award Ceremony Date: Wednesday, May 25th at 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
- c. Ceremony Location: The Supreme Court of Louisiana
- d. Voting Google Form Link Will Be Provided in February

Curtis N. and Mariarenee C. went over the Children's Law Awards criteria and voting process for this year's awards process. The voting poll is now open and will remain open until Friday, February 25th for all Children's Law Committee members to access and vote.

Curtis N. and Mariarenee provided a summary about each Nominee. This year the Committee had four nominees from different organizations and fields in the practice of Children's Law. The nominees included:

- *Ms. Shentell Brown, St. Martinville, La. with 16th J.D.C. D.A.'s Office.*
- *Ms. Cheri Deatsch, New Orleans, La. with Orleans Public Defenders Office*
- *Ms. Laurel Sheridan, New Orleans, La. with CrescentCare Legal Services*
- *Ms. Mary-Ann McGrath Swaim, New Orleans, La. with Southeast Louisiana Legal Services*
- *Advanced Advocacy Project, Baton Rouge, La. with EBR Public Defenders Office and LCCR*

Members who knew the nominees or the organizations associated with the nominees provided additional feedback about them and the work that they do. The discussion was both positive and encouraging of the work the nominees do in the legal community for children and children's law initiatives. Discussion ended with further instructions on the Children's Law Awards voting process. The Children's Law Awards ceremony will be held on May 25, 2022, at the Supreme Court of Louisiana.

8. Adjournment – Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 18th, 2022, at Noon

At the moment, meeting is scheduled to be a hybrid meeting, but more information will be shared as we approach closer to our next meeting date. All working groups please be on the lookout for additional corresponding information. Meeting was moved for adjournment by the Committee.