

Commission to Study Residential Placement of Children
March 6, 2008

MEETING NOTES

The results from the **Evaluation Survey** on satisfaction of the quarterly meetings and direction of the Commission were provided. The evaluation survey was passed out and completed at the last meeting (12/06/07). Generally, the results showed that the members are satisfied with the meetings and the progress of the Commission. However, the Commission members recommend “more communication” be provided to members between meetings and the need for provider involvement.

Dennis Sutton was invited to present information from a recent study entitled, *Education Survey Summary Data of the West Virginia Emergency Shelter Provider Network* (January 29, 2008). This led to good discussion among those present. There are places that are working very well and some that need attention as to making sure children get into education programs.

Matt Kittle provided the definition on “**Awaiting Foster Care**” that is being proposed under the protections of **McKinney-Vento** as administered through WVDE Policy 4110. The Commission members present endorsed the revisions. A letter of endorsement by Secretary Walker, on behalf of the Commission members, will be sent to Matt. This letter and a link to the revisions being proposed will be sent to the Commission members and frequent attendees at the meetings. Additional comments on the recommended revisions can be assessed under title Attendance,

Policy 4110 by accessing the WV Department of Education website at <http://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/>.

A draft handout was distributed, and discussed briefly, that will become a brochure regarding out-of-home care children to be used to provide the public (school districts, parents and advocates) with information on **Rights, Responsibilities & Opportunities under the McKinney-Vento Act**. This brochure will also be sent to appropriate DHHR staff. Jason Najmulski Commissioner for the DHHR, Bureau for Children and Families, will provide a letter to accompany the brochure for DHHR staff.

DHHR & DJS have formed a partnership to address issues for adjudicated delinquent youth placed out of state. Secretary Walker met with Secretary James Spears (DMAPS), and DHHR staff, to address issues for adjudicated delinquent youth placed out of state (approximately half of those placed out-of state are adjudicated youth). It is anticipated that the statewide System of Care initiative will also be involved. Of particular concern is the eastern panhandle region, which has the majority of the youth that are adjudicated and sent out-of-state. They would like to go to the communities in this area, determine what problems exist, and how they may help to rehabilitate the youth. Commission member, Judge Spaulding will ask Judge Groh about joining this group.

Dr. Karen Larry provided previously distributed data on **home school** enrollment in West Virginia. Currently, parents do not need approval from the WVDE to home school. Although Home School parents can choose from several different tests to determine their child's academic achievement, the student is no longer required by WV State Code to meet class level standards. Home School advocates should be included in discussions that involve educational issues.

The **Judicial Survey** results were provided. The results from the Judicial Survey will be provided to the Service Delivery and Development Workgroup and will be incorporated into the Service Array. This information will be used in the evaluation of service needs and gaps across the state.

Based on developing more specific data on the placement of children out-of-state as requested by the Commission, a report was offered reflecting placements of children within fifty miles of the WV border. The report looked at both the distance from a WV border and the distance from a child's home county to the out of state facility. Besides finding that while a large number of placements were within 50 miles of a West Virginia border, most of these were not within 50 miles of the child's home county. Although the Commission is interested in looking at distance for children's placement, they also reiterated that a "placement must not be simply a specific geographical boundary or span from the child's home base, even when this stretches across a state line (border). This is grounded in local community-based referral to a facility, program or service location based on the best interest of each child" *Advancing New Outcomes* (page 13). This work has also led to how the categories for reporting will be used. The Commission suggested a multi-tier report that will be developed and reviewed at the June meeting.

The early parts of the agenda prohibit covering all topics. Several items on the agenda were tabled until the next Commission meeting. This will include a planning session to review recommendations and work completed to date.

NEXT MEETING: JUNE 12, 2008