

Virginia Governor's Children's Cabinet

Logistics

Name of Coordinating Body: Virginia Governor's Children's Cabinet

Administrative Home: The Cabinet is an advisory body to the Governor.

Staffing: The staff is composed of one full-time Executive Director who partners with Cabinet members' staff and deputies. When available, fellows and interns provide additional human capital.

Funding: The Executive Director position is funded by a state agency.

Membership: The Cabinet is composed of the following members:

- Secretary of Health and Human Resources
- Secretary of Education
- First Lady of Virginia
- Lt. Governor of Virginia
- Secretary of Commerce and Trade
- Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security

Structure

- *Children's Cabinet meetings:* The Cabinet meets monthly.
- *Staff meetings:* The staff meet monthly and work together in between Children's Cabinet meetings through interagency teams to achieve the goals.
- *Agency head meetings:* The Children's Cabinet includes agency heads at their meetings on a quarterly basis.
- *Stakeholder meetings:* The Children's Cabinet hosts an annual Stakeholder Forum to share information between state and local agencies, the faith communities, families, universities, and nonprofit organizations.

History

Year & Method of Establishment: Established in 2014 under the Governor's Executive Order 21.

Duties/Responsibilities/Goals: The Children's Cabinet was established to develop and implement a comprehensive policy agenda related to the well-being of youth from birth to age 21 throughout the Commonwealth. It evaluates and recommends strategies to optimize and align local, state, and federal public resources, along with public-private partnerships, to enhance current and prospective programs and services for Virginia's children and their families, particularly those at high risk.

Current Work:

The Cabinet is focused on its two major initiatives: Classrooms Not Courtrooms and Challenged Schools. Both initiatives bring agencies together to work on focused projects. The cabinet is also working to advance and align policies that cross multiple sectors.

Priority Projects/Initiatives

Classrooms Not Courtrooms Initiative: Reduce student suspensions, expulsions, referrals to law enforcement, and the disparate impact of these practices on minorities and students with disabilities.

Challenged Schools Initiative: Enhance educational outcomes and workforce readiness in Petersburg, Norfolk, and Richmond by facilitating a replicable model to improve student achievement through high quality partnerships, including wraparound services.

Advancing Policy: Enable greater access to prevention services, high quality physical and behavioral health, nutrition, early childhood programs, stable housing, workforce training, social services, and community supports through schools and other convenient points of service.

Accomplishments

- Stronger and sustained relationships forming horizontally across state agency leadership.
- Strengthened trust and vertical relationships between state and local agencies.

- A Model MOU between school administrators and law enforcement to reduce disproportionate discipline for students of color and students with disabilities.
- Culture shifts, data, and conversations that reflects the diverse community of the Commonwealth.
- Improved outcomes around attendance, suspension rates, nutrition, student outcomes, and school accreditation in priority communities.

Contact Information

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Words of Wisdom: The Children's Cabinet's initial focus on a few priority communities has provided an invaluable opportunity to deeply learn the local history, context, values, and vision that is essential to building genuine relationships and sustainable initiatives. Furthermore making state resources accessible to local communities has been a strong lever for impact and one that is replicable across the state.

Links

Children's Cabinet Website:

<http://governor.virginia.gov/cc>

Children's Cabinet Annual Report:

http://governor.virginia.gov/media/7999/virginia-governors-childrens-cabinet-2015-16-annual-report_final.pdf