

**Maryland General Assembly
Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families
2013 Interim
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Delegate Geraldine Valentino-Smith, Co-chair**

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THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families

December 10, 2015

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., Co-chairman
The Honorable Michael E. Busch, Co-chairman
Members of the Legislative Policy Committee

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families respectfully submits the following summary of its 2015 interim activities.

The joint committee met four times during the interim to consider children and youth issues. The meetings were held as follows:

- June 24, 2015 – Hearing: Spending on Services for Children, Youth, and Families;
- September 9, 2015 – Hearing: Maryland School Psychologists' Association and Barriers Faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning/Queer (LGBTQ) youth;
- October 21, 2015 – Hearing: Navigating State Services for Individuals with Disabilities; and
- November 17, 2015 – Hearing: Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs), Therapeutic and Support Programs, and Overview of a Juvenile Justice Initiative in Prince George's County.

On June 24, 2015, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) presented an overview of the report, *Spending on Services for Children, Youth, and Families: A Data Resource Guide*, which compiled State and local management board (LMB) expenditure data for services and program for children, youth, and families. Governor's Office for Children (GOC) Executive Director Arlene Lee responded to questions raised by DLS and presented on the reorganization of the office, the new children's cabinet strategic plan, and cooperation with LMBs. Finally, the LMBs discussed the findings of the DLS report and the recent changes made to GOC.

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On September 9, 2015, the Maryland School Psychologists' Association discussed the work that school psychologists do in helping students, families, and teachers gain the skills to effectively communicate, manage behavior, and develop healthy relationships. The second half of the meeting focused on the experiences of LGBTQ youth in Maryland and included first-hand accounts as well as a presentation by the Youth Equality Alliance which discussed the findings in its report, *Living in the Margins: A Report on the Challenged of LGBTQ Youth in Maryland Education, Foster Care, and Juvenile Justice Systems*. As a follow up to that meeting, the joint committee sent letters to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Department of Juvenile Services, and Department of Human Resources requesting that the agencies report on policies, procedures, and trainings related to LGBTQ youth.

The meeting on October 21, 2015, began with a discussion of programs and services for youth with disabilities transitioning to adulthood. Representative of the Department of Disabilities, MSDE, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation discussed how they work together and separately to prepare youth to transition to higher education, training, or employment and they receive the benefits for which they are eligible. The meeting concluded with a discussion with representatives of the Department of Human Resources and the Developmental Disabilities Administration on the medical transition for youth with disabilities.

Finally, on November 17, 2015, the committee heard an overview on Youth Service Bureaus, which provide delinquency prevention services to Maryland's youth. The briefing included a presentation on evidence based programs and YSB funding. The joint committee was briefed on three therapeutic and support programs in Maryland. Roberta's House, a grief support center in Baltimore, discussed their programs for families who have experienced loss and program outcomes. The joint committee also heard from two therapeutic equine programs, the Therapeutic and Recreational Riding Center and the vR Equine Growth and Learning Center. The meeting concluded with a presentation on a Prince George's County Juvenile Court and School Safety Workgroup initiative to develop interagency policies to reduce school-based arrests for certain offenses by diversion. This initiative included a review of current school and community-based diversion resources and strategies, State school discipline reform efforts, incident data, outcome data, and impediments to implementation of diversion initiatives.

The joint committee has no current plans to hold further meetings prior to next interim, but should departmental legislation pertaining to matters within the subject jurisdiction of the joint committee be introduced during the 2016 legislative session, the committee may elect to meet to determine whether to express its opinion on such legislation.

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The Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families wishes to thank those individuals who contributed their time and talent during the 2015 interim to inform and advise the joint committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator Nancy J. King
Senate Chair

Delegate Geraldine Valentino-Smith
House Chair

NJK:GVS/KSS/mlm

cc: Members of the Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families
Mr. Warren G. Deschenaux
Ms. Lynne B. Porter