



ALABAMA COMMISSION ON THE EVALUATION OF SERVICES

Meeting Minutes

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Date and Location

The Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services met on April 2, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. in room 825 of the Alabama State House, 11 S. Union Street, Montgomery, AL.

Attendance

| Member | Present | Teleconference | Absent |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Chairman Orr | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vice-Chair Filmore | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Albritton | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Allred | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Carlton | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Coleman-Madison | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Green | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Gray | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Sawyer | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Sells | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner White | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Whitt | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Poole, <i>ex officio</i> (Finance Director) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Fulford, <i>ex officio</i> (LSA Fiscal Division Deputy Director) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



A lawful quorum of voting members was present to conduct business.

Notice of Meeting:

Sufficient notice of the meeting was posted on March 18, 2024, to the Secretary of State's Open Meeting Act Posting Board.

Approval of Minutes:

Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting on November 14, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Sells to adopt the minutes as written. Vice-Chair Filmore seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.

Reports and Presentation:

Evaluation Results of the Helping Families Initiative – Savana Griffin

Questions and Answers provided following the presentation:

Commissioner Coleman-Madison raised a question about scrapping the HFI model for the 17 individual programs and wanted further clarification regarding HFI operations of 17 different programs. Ms. Griffin responded that the staff recommended HFI return to the established model that was founded in research and evidence and further clarified that each local HFI program was being operated differently and not to the model.

Commission Sells questioned the budget for HIF and was provided further clarification regarding the total budget and the administrative budget.

HFI Response to the Evaluation was provided by John Tyson – HFI Director of the State Support Team

Mr. Tyson provided a description of the mandatory attendance act and the history of the HFI program being managed by the local District Attorney's office. Mr. Tyson stated the benefits of the program encompassed all citizens that live in a HFI jurisdiction and included: resolving attendance issues, behavioral issues, teacher retention, school safety, neighborhood, and family problems, among others.

Mr. Tyson discussed the new HFI programs that were scheduled to start in the coming year, but their internal plan was not expansion. The program has been measured by data and citizens. Data include truant students, parents benefiting from fewer violations of the codes of conduct, fewer suspensions, fewer absences, fewer arrests, among other things. Mr. Tyson further stated that all students benefit from better attendance, fewer chronic absences, and safer schools. Alabama's benefits are recognized in crime related savings.

Questions and Answers provided following the presentation:

Commissioner Carlton requested clarification on conflicting information provided by Mr. Tyson. Expansion is not the plan, but HFI is expanding in 2024 and circuits have received funding but are not currently operating. Mr. Tyson stated the circuit previously signed MOU's and that some of them have already received funding but will start operating soon. Mr. Tyson provided explanations on the four new circuits. Commissioner Carlton wanted further clarification on the number of years some circuits received funding but were not in operation (FY23 and FY24). Mr. Tyson, although he anticipates the circuits to start operations they have already been funded.

Commission White wanted clarification on conflicting information provided by Mr. Tyson and the Evaluation regarding outcome data being measured. Ms. Griffin stated that the data is not being collected. Did you share the outcome data with ACES staff? Mr. Tyson stated that the information was provided. Ms. Griffin also responded and clarified that although HFI collects data through monthly reporting. The information provided to ACES had significant issues and could not be relied upon. The data was inaccurate, and no information was provided on the outcomes mentioned today (example: crimes and arrests). Ms. Griffin provided additional information on local HFI programs that tracked students through name recognition only.

Director Morgan expanded on the ACES response and further clarified ACES efforts to validate the data with local HFI programs. There were significant conflicts between local HFI program data and the HFI State Support Team. Some



data was even duplicative for multiple local HFI programs. Mr. Tyson responded that the ACES team ignored the data sent to them because they didn't like it. Mr. Tyson provided examples of the Russell County story, the Thomasville City chronic absenteeism data, and the research conducted for Mobile in 2009.

Commissioner Coleman-Madison asked if there was a standard format or form provided to HFI so that they could meet the data request? Director Morgan provided the initial response in that data requested was sent to HFI in a template format but upon receiving the initial response being returned in a different form, we made additional requests (examples of the monthly reporting). Assistant Director Dean provided more clarification and stated that the data provided was descriptive statistical reports and ACES attempts to do a deeper dive into data when evaluating program outcomes. ACES staff attempted to do this and there were just too many issues with the data and to continue to use the data would be misleading. Mr. Tyson responded that there are issues with the data, but they have been working on the issues for three years. They have made huge progress since the ACES work stopped and mentioned getting electronic student data to populate the existing case management system.

Commissioner Coleman-Madison followed up, questioning why HFI didn't provide the data in the requested format and asked who was responsible for making sure the local HFI programs were following guidelines. Director Morgan responded by pointing to the lack of accountability throughout and the inability to control the District Attorney's. Commissioner Coleman-Madison found it to be a huge issue that the funding is being provided without accountability. Director Morgan pointed to the program having roots in evidence but needs improved data collection. Mr. Tyson stated that he would disagree with the comments.

Commissioner White made a statement suggesting that ACEs and HIF work together to decide how best to measure the program's success, specifically, attendance, behavior, and family services before and after the interventions.

Chairman Orr stated that HFI has grown and has experienced growing pains, however we appreciated the work of HFI.

Vice-Chair Filmore stated that truancy is an issue across the state. While we do appreciate the effort of HFI, we recognize that data is an important piece and change is needed.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

Adjournment:

There being no further business, at 10:51 a.m. Chairman Orr moved the meeting be adjourned.