November 9, 2017

**Florida Children and Youth**

**Cabinet Members**

Wansley Walters

Chair

Secretary Justin Senior

Agency for Health Care Administration

Director Barbara Palmer

Agency for Persons with Disabilities

Secretary Mike Carroll

Department of Children and Families

Secretary Christina K. Daly

Department of Juvenile Justice

Commissioner Pam Stewart

Department of Education

Surgeon General Celeste Philip, MD,

Department of Health

Executive Director Alan Abramowitz

Guardian ad Litem

Director Rodney MacKinnon

Office of Early Learning

Director Zackary Gibson

Governor’s Office of Adoption

and Child Protection

Justice Barbara Pariente

Designee of the Chief Justice

Representative Gayle Harrell

Designee of the Speaker of the House

Senator Lauren Book

Designee of the Senate President

Sandra “Sam” Himmel

Superintendent of Schools

Berthy de la Rosa-Aponte

Designee of the Attorney General

Victoria Zepp

Designee of the Chief Financial Officer

Tanya Wilkins

Governor’s Appointee

Diana Ragbeer

Governor’s Appointee

Nelson Diaz

Governor’s Appointee

Steven Uhlfelder

Governor’s Appointee

Judge Sandy Karlan

Governor’s Appointee

[Address]

Dear Chair \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

The members of The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet recently developed a coordinated focused program to work with members of the Legislature in the upcoming session to achieve the goals identified as being critical to the well-being of Florida’s children.

The Cabinet was created by the Florida Legislature in 2007 to have all agencies that work with families and children to work collaboratively to invest in the education and skills of our children and youth, develop a cohesive vision, align public resources to support healthy growth and development, and promote increased efficiency and improved service delivery.

Cabinet members defined three issues to work on during the next 18 months, using data from a variety of sources. The three problems are to be related to the vision of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet: *All children in Florida grow up safe, healthy, educated and prepared to meet their full potential.*

After reviewing data from several sources including the National KIDS COUNT Data, the Florida KIDS COUNT Data, and the Long Range Performance Plans (LRPP) from the eight Cabinet agencies, members selected three areas to address from July 2017 through January 2019.

 **The three focus areas voted upon by the members present include:**

1. **Continued focus on early childhood, including prenatal, infants and toddlers because of the importance of early brain development; and school readiness for our three to five year olds.**
2. **Mental Health & Substance Abuse (safety and health), including teens with significant behavioral/mental health issues; suicide rate**
3. **Children living in high poverty areas (safety, health, and education), producing positive outcomes; safe and affordable housing (and neighborhoods); access to quality education; access to health care; livable wages.**

The overriding concept for these three areas is that there must be a multi-generational approach to addressing these issues, as well as continuing to examine the data in terms of race, gender, and disabilities.

Each member committed to the three priorities and to:

1. Identify a person(s) in their agency assigned to work on these three priorities.
2. Invite the assigned staff person(s) to attend the next meeting of the Cabinet to assist with presenting solutions and actions their agencies will take to address the three priorities. This may result in the creation of a multi-agency group or tasking an existing multi agency group with this priority work.
3. Reporting to the Cabinet, and develop methods to measure the outcomes/effectiveness of the collective work.

Prior to the next Cabinet meeting in November, the Policy Impact Committee will work with the agencies to determine how each one will address these three priority areas. The Cabinet will then develop a comprehensive inventory of all campaigns and legislative initiatives on the three priorities and begin to address a coordinated approach.

Please consider these three priority areas highlighted by the Cabinet members, after extensive review of the state of Florida’s children and families, when reviewing your legislative proposals.

Thanking you in advance for your commitment and cooperation. If you have any questions, or need assistance, please contact Lindsey Zander, Executive Director of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet, at (850) 488-9410.

Sincerely,



Wansley Walters

Chair, Florida Children and Youth Cabinet