



Department of Family and Children Services, Clayton County

Board of Directors Meeting

held

Wednesday February 27, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

Board Members Present:

Quen Howard - Vice Chairman
Charlton Bivins - Board Member
Dr. Barbara Pulliam - Board Member

Absent Board Members:

Tia Simon - Chairman
Dr. Chantara Carter - Board Member

Staff Members Present:

Dr. Nia Cantey - County Director
Deneka Manning - Deputy Director
A'Kera Clay - Administrative Assistant
Monica Edwards - OFI Customer Service Supervisor
Nancy Ward -
Patrice Davis - Recording Secretary

Other Members Present:

Jacqueline Cooper - Clayton County Foster Mom
Gloria Parker - Clayton County Foster Mom
Marie Atkins - Clayton County Foster Mom
Brenda Harrison - Public Audience (CASA Volunteer)

1. Call to order and Invocation

The meeting was called to order by the Vice Chairman, Quen Howard at 10:15 a.m. due to the absence of the Chairman. She welcomed everybody to the meeting. Invocation was offered by Mr. Charlton Bivins.

2. Audience Participation

There was audience participation; three (3) foster moms and one (1) member from the public. Dr. Pulliam mentioned how happy she was to have audience participation. Mr. Bivins indicated that all introduce themselves to the visitors. This was done. He also mentioned that our Chairman, Tia Simon and Dr. Chantera Carter were absent.

3. Reports from the Foster Parents

a. Jacqueline Cooper – Foster Mom

Ms. Cooper said she was happy to be at the meeting. She also said that she was shocked about the amount of money Clayton County gives per diem for foster care compared to the other counties. She felt like the foster parents of Clayton County were being “lowballed”. Ms. Cooper said she wanted to know what the community could do to allow Clayton to get more funding. She said she would like more funding to help our children.

b. Gloria Parker – Foster Mom

Ms. Parker reported that Fulton and Clayton have the most people wanting to become foster parents. She said she is a caregiver navigator. She also mentioned that although Clayton is short staff it can be a good thing. She said some time ago the case managers would normally call them and let them know how much money the child might have in their funds. She said if the money is not spent it is not given the following year and that could contribute to why we don’t get as much money as the other counties. Ms. Parker continued to say there were good foster parents in Clayton County. She also said she has seen the difference in leadership at DFCS Clayton County. She complained that some of the case workers were only there for a pay check. Ms. Parker said she has been fostering for 20 years. She said her and her husband have fostered over 200 children. She said she is hoping Clayton get case workers who have the heart for their job. Ms. Parker was commended by the Board for a job well done.

Mr. Bivins asked Ms. Parker to explain what a caregiver navigator does. She said this position was created in 2016 to help new people coming onboard to help with the approval process. The position also helps to mentor the people after they have become foster parents. Mr. Bivins then asked about Clayton being the largest group who wants to be foster parents. Ms. Parker said the foster parents are not being followed up on. She said they are people who attended the information session a year ago and still have not been given an application packet. Ms. Bivins asked her (Ms. Parker) what would she do differently in the process. She said after you go to the information session, they should receive a welcome letter. They should get the instruction packet at that same time. They also should have received a medical form to be filled out by their doctor. Once those forms are filled out and return to the Resource Development person, then they would be set up for fingerprinting and background check along with drug screen. Ms. Parker said she would prefer the administrative part to be a lot quicker. She said people have gotten discouraged about fostering because of the process.

Mr. Bivins asked if there was a way to check the funding balance for her foster children. Ms. Parker said no. She said the account follows the child. She also indicated that some foster parents use the money for everything else except the child. She said if the funds are not used on the children that are allocated; they would think we don’t need the money. She said the foster parents are not even

aware that the money is there. Ms. Parker said she has a lot of receipts to show she has spent on her foster children. Some she will turn in and some she won't.

Mr. Bivins then asked if during orientation if enough is being said about the financial aspect of fostering. Ms. Parker said most foster parents don't even know they need to fill out an invoice to get a per diem.

Ms. Howard then asked Ms. Parker if she would prefer a meeting. Ms. Cooper said DFCS has sent out an email about meetings stating that they are mandatory. She said not every foster parent would come. Ms. Cooper intervened and said you have to attend the meetings to get information, especially about the invoices. She also mentioned that she met a foster parent who did not know you had to fill out a form to get your per diem. Ms. Cooper had to explain to her that in Georgia it is necessary because she was coming from another State (NY). Dr. Cantey then mentioned that Georgia is not an electronic State.

Dr. Pulliam asked if there was mentoring going on and if that person is being paid. She also suggested that there could be people that go to the foster homes and remind them about certain things they need to do. Dr. Pulliam said she realized that there is not enough money, but how do you make your plans knowing that. She said although there is a need for foster parents; if we can only service 300 why sign up 700. Ms. Parker said everybody that signs up to become a foster parent is not approved. Dr. Pulliam said when she was a superintendent, after finger printing most of the people wanting to be hired in the system couldn't get the job because they had background issue with the courts or been to jail. She said that might be the same issue with taking care of children.

Dr. Pulliam said Ms. Parker mentioned that children were coming out of homes that were worse than where they were coming from. Dr. Pulliam said that this should not be happening. Ms. Parker said this actually was happening.

Dr. Pulliam said anybody who does foster care is a good person because you have to look after them as if they were your own.

Dr. Pulliam said she is working on an article about DFCS Clayton County and she is hoping to use some of the things spoken from the foster moms today. She mentioned to Ms. Parker that she stated that she has great foster parents. Dr. Pulliam wants her to tell her what makes them great. Ms. Parker said taking care of the child like it is your own. Not just doing it because you get a per diem. Giving them an education; enhancing their interests. Ms. Parker mentioned she has 2 children taking piano lessons. Dr. Pulliam then thanked her.

c. Brenda Harrison – Public Audience

Ms. Harrison thanked the foster moms for their service. She said as a CASA volunteer they don't get paid, although she has to acknowledge the DFCS workers. She then asked if the workers were getting resources to do their jobs. She then said when it is mentioned that Clayton County does not get as much money as other

county does; she is asking what is needed to be done to make that change. Ms. Harrison said as a CASA volunteer she is told that case managers have 3 days to respond to them. She said that is too long. She wants that to change. She thinks there are certain items that need quick responses. She said she has to be careful what she says because she is being investigated for sharing information. She said it is all about the children and she was doing something to help a child. Ms. Harrison said these case managers need time management courses to better align their time to deal with all that they do. Ms. Harrison said she will do what she has to do because it is about the children.

Dr. Cantey responded to Ms. Harrison. She said the case managers have 24 hours to respond, but 72 hours to resolve. Ms. Harrison said that was not told to her. Ms. Manning intervened and told her that we are given 3 days to resolve the issue and 24 hours to acknowledge that a call was made. Ms. Manning said she would get a booklet to Ms. Harrison in regards to this information. Ms. Harrison said it was not necessary for her to give her the booklet the error had still continued.

(At this point another foster parent joined the meeting, Ms. Marie Atkins)

Ms. Atkins said she is new to becoming a foster parent and she is learning. She was then congratulated for making that step.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

5. Program Reports

a. Dr. Cantey

Dr. Cantey went through the Service Reports where she compared the numbers from February 2018 to February 2019.

Dr. Cantey also spoke about Resource Development. She said our foster parents are more personal to us. She also said the kids might belong to us but they are placed in other DFCS homes.

Dr. Cantey mentioned that we have 14,212 children in care. She said that number is lower than where we were last fall which was 15,000. She said the aim would be family preservation for these children. That number is to go up. Mr. Bivins said this is a good thing to prevent placement and care. Dr. Cantey said family preservation is really to give mom and dad a change to repair whatever happened. She said we have 277 youths that we legally have custody have. This means mom and dad might still be active in the children's life.

Dr. Pulliam asked if fathers/men can be foster parents. Dr. Cantey said anybody can be a foster parent. She also mentioned that cases are never normally

placed in the names of fathers, but the mothers. Dr. Pulliam then asked if there were men who were foster parents. Dr. Cantey said she does not have a demographic number for that.

Dr. Cantey said 57 homes are open in Clayton County, 277 children in care; 15 of those are receiving after care supervision. Those 15 have been receiving support services and reunited with Mom or Dad.

Dr. Cantey said youths are to be reunited with their families within 12 months. Beyond 12 months we are out of compliance. Dr. Cantey said she has a good relationship with Judge Butler and she might not approve certain things for a child for adoption.

Dr. Cantey continued to report on the Board report. She said you will not see a judge approve an adoption without a resource (a home that will finalize). Dr. Cantey said there are 17 children in Clayton that have no resource. They might be in a home, but the parent is not interesting in adopting. Dr. Cantey said we are not doing well with finalizing adoption. She said Ms. Manning is working on closing with the Adoption administrator. There are also weekly calls on Mondays to discuss adoptions.

Ms. Howard asked how long the process for adoption is. Dr. Cantey said parents are placed on a waiting list for their preferred youth to become available; that could take years.

Dr. Pulliam asked about those children who no longer want to live with their parents. Dr. Cantey said that is not a goal for us. She said she wants us to add the amount of Guardianship and the types of Permanency on the report. Only adoption or reunification is permanent.

b. Monica Edwards – OFI Customer Service Supervisor

Ms. Edwards reported on the numbers from Office of Family Independence (OFI) for the month of January 2019.

Expedite – Foodstamps services provided with 7 days is at 95.45% . The unexpedited cases are at 84.61% over an average of 89.9%. Mr. Bivins asked if 89.9% was the district average. Ms. Edwards said yes, for this period. She said we might be a little below average. This probably has to do with our staffing. She said they just hired 22 new people that will begin on 3/18. Mr. Bivins asked if the staffing will bring the numbers up and she agreed. Mr. Bivins said how quickly the new hires will be ready to work. Ms. Edwards said they have to train in their program; food stamps or Medicaid. She said after a year they will get training with another program.

Ms. Edwards said another 10 workers will be needed. She was also asked what the qualifications were to do that type of job is. She said experience, being able to pass the background check.

Ms. Edwards continued to report on Medicaid. This is currently at 76.28%. Pregnancy Medicaid is at 51.59%. Medicaid for Children and adults are at 86.32%. The TANF number is 97.12%. They are above average which is 96.5% Ms. Edwards said the 22 hires are awaiting background checks. The other 10 vacancies are awaiting approval to be filled. Ms. Edwards also mentioned that the staff that came in a year ago is doing training for another program. This she said has contributed to the decrease in the numbers. Ms. Edwards continued to say one (1) person transferred to Social Services and there was 1 resignation for the month.

Ms. Howard asked if an exit interview is done when people leave. Ms. Edwards said she is not sure but she believes they do. Dr. Cantey said HR usually does it.

Mr. Bivins asked if it is State policy for training to occur away or onsite. Dr. Cantey said training has its own department. She said they have to find space and the timeframe for this to happen.

The retention rate was then asked about. Ms. Edwards said we have a high turnover rate. She said the job is stressful. She said those workers doing the double or triple jobs are getting tired and leaving.

(Approaching Executive Session at 11:15 a.m.)

6. Executive Session

a. Personnel Report

Dr. Cantey reported on the Personnel Report. Dr. Pulliam asked what the process is used to do interviews. She said when she interviewed teachers, she would tell them about the pros of the job. Dr. Cantey said those that are new to the work will think they can do it. She said they are asked questions about their background and is told what is expected. Dr. Pulliam said somebody needs to do a study for the case managers in Georgia. There needs to be some kind of screening. She said it cost money to hire and get them set up.

Ms. Howard said when you are interviewing, once you get on the inside you can train. Dr. Pulliam said it cost a lot of money to interview people and then they leave, plus there is 6 weeks of training before you can use them.

b. Tracking Report

Dr. Cantey asked Nancy Ward to issue the February tracking report to the Board members which she did. She went through it. This is County money spent. Dr. Cantey said 4 installments have been received so far. This process of tracking has just started in November 2018. The fiscal year started in July 2018. Dr. Cantey said there will be a

meeting with Regional Accounting in March to minimize any surprises. Our report might look different from Regional Accounting because we are able to apply things to the report which Regional Accounting wouldn't until later on.

Dr. Cantey said in reference to the youth, anything over \$200 the county pays for. Discussions were held in regards to the cost of the chairs and additional chairs to be bought for the conference room.

(Executive Session ended at 11:34 a.m.)

7. Other Matters

a. Board Badges

Mr. Bivins is requesting a Board badge. Ms. Manning said she will ask Ms. Gayle to order for Mr. Bivins and Dr. Carter. Dr. Cantey said if the budget allows it.

b. Mr. Charlton Bivins

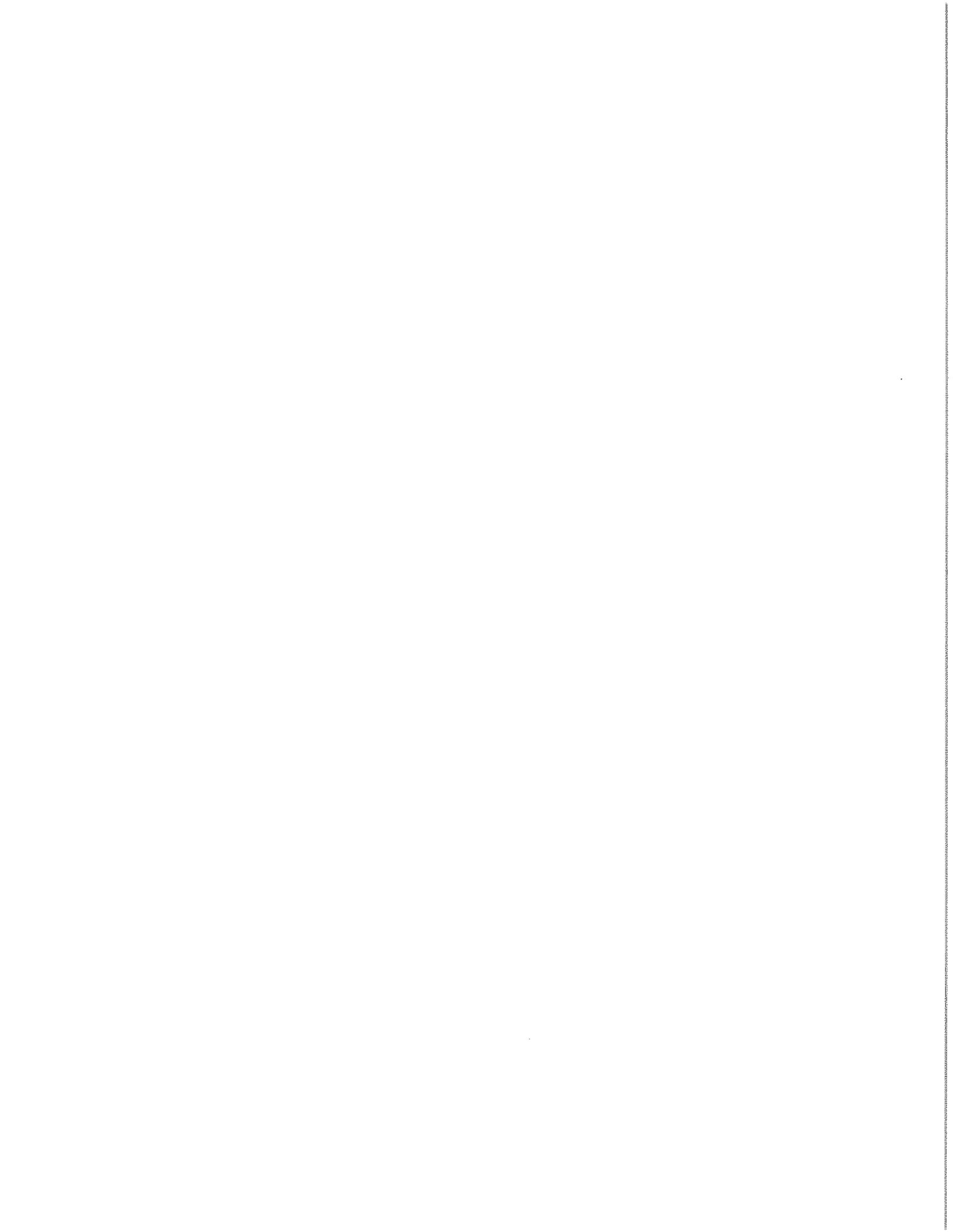
Mr. Bivins reported that a State of the Union with DFCS needs to be started. He said there is a consensus that the state handles DFCS. He is asking if there is any article or documentation in regards to funding. Dr. Cantey said the State only pays for the per diem. She said the money that is issued to a child per day is all that the State gives. Dr. Cantey said the policy states this.

Dr. Pulliam said 2 board members can get together and discuss this matter. Mr. Bivins said he wants to advocate. Dr. Cantey said we pay a per diem. The amount of per diem is depending on the severity of the child. Anything additional would be related to birthdays, medications, or diapers. Dr. Pulliam is asking for documentation about the things that we pay for. She is requesting this for herself and Mr. Bivins.

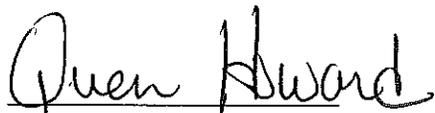
Dr. Pulliam said she was impressed with the Conference Room. Dr. Cantey said thanks to the board this was made possible. She then mentioned the Stakeholder's Meeting to be held soon. Dr. Cantey mentioned that the rooms we will be using did not come with a charge.

Mr. Bivins then spoke about the visitors we had at the meeting today. He said we were not prepared for them. He asked if protocols are in place for questions and answers at the meeting. He said if everybody was to ask questions it would be a 3 hour meeting. Ms. Howard and Dr. Pulliam said there needs to be protocol with this type of thing. Mr. Bivins asked if there is any way we could know we would have visitors. Dr. Cantey said we could always relocate and go into one of the training rooms. Mr. Bivins asked Dr. Cantey if she knew that many people were coming. Dr. Cantey said AFPAG meeting was held recently and the foster parents; they were encouraged to attend their local board meeting. This, she said, could be the reason for their turn out today.

Dr. Cantey mentioned that the Block Grant is to be completed by Friday. Dr. Pulliam then asked what the expectation for that was. Dr. Cantey said the Block Grant only



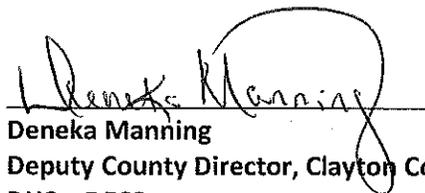
Respectfully yours,



Quen Howard, Vice Chair
Clayton County, DFCS Board



Dr. Nia Cantey
County Director, Clayton County
DHS – DFCS



Deneka Manning
Deputy County Director, Clayton County
DHS – DFCS



Patrice Davis
Recording Secretary