

**STATE AND LOCAL ADVISORY TEAM (SLAT)  
CHILDREN’S SERVICES ACT (CSA)  
Richmond/Henrico Rooms  
1604 Santa Rosa Road  
Richmond, VA 23229**

**MINUTES  
November 6, 2025**

**Members Present:**

Mills Jones, SLAT Chair  
Sabrina Gross, Vice-Chair, Department of Education (DOE)  
Lesley Abashian, Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT) – Local Government Representative  
Cristy Corbin, Parent Representative  
The Honorable Marilyn Goss, Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court (J&DR)  
Patti Hodge, Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)  
Grace Hughes, Virginia Department of Health (VDH)  
Linda McWilliams, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)  
Em Parente, Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)  
Laura Reed, Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)  
Kari Savage, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)  
Shannon Updike, Virginia Coalition of Private Provider Associations (VCOPPA)

**Members Absent:**

Sandy Bryant, CPMT – Community Services Board (CSB) Representative  
William Stanley, CPMT – Court Services Unit (CSU) Representative  
Amy Swift, CPMT – DSS Representative  
Kristina Williams-Pugh, CPMT – School Representative

**CSA Staff Members Present:**

Stephanie Bacote  
Mary Bell  
Gezelle Glasgow  
Marsha Mucha

**Welcome/Opening**

Mills Jones called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.

The agenda for today’s meeting was approved on a motion by Lesley Abashian, seconded by Shannon Updike and carried. A quorum was present.

**Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments.

## Approval of Minutes

The August 7, 2025, meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Marilyn Goss, seconded by Shannon Updike, and carried.

## Workgroup Updates

- Mr. Jones provided an informative update on the Sponsored Residential Work Group, highlighting its purpose and ongoing efforts, and explained that the work group was convened to bring together a diverse range of stakeholders to examine all facets of sponsored residential services, including funding structures and the match rate. Mr. Jones noted that the group has been engaged in thoughtful discussions and data review to ensure equitable and sustainable practices. Mr. Jones further shared that the work group is currently developing a comprehensive rate determination tool designed to promote consistency, transparency, and informed decision-making across the system.
- Mr. Jones also reported that the Commission on Youth (COY) had recently released their report on the Review of Virginia's Special Education Dispute Resolution System (Chapter 502, 2024). Report # SD7 has been posted to the General Assembly's Legislative Information System.
- COY will also be receiving a report at its upcoming meeting from the Office of the Children's Ombudsman Relief of Custody Work Group.

## Old Business

- Policy Update – Stephanie Bacote provided an update on the following policies:
  - Policy 5.1 – Data Set  
-At the SEC's September 11, 2025, meeting, the State Executive Council (SEC) approved a 45-day public comment period to begin the process of rescinding Policy 5.1 and replacing it with Policy 4.5.6. The public comment period closed on October 31, 2025. No public comments were received.
  - Policy 4.5.6 – Local Match Rates  
-As noted above, Ms. Bacote explained that Policy 4.5.6 would replace Policy 5.1 – Data Set. At the SEC's September 11, 2025 meeting, the SEC approved a 45-day public comment period. The public comment period concluded on October 31, 2025. No public comments were received.
  - Policy 4.1.1 – Children in Need of Services (CHINS)  
-At the SEC September 11, 2025, meeting, the SEC approved a 60-day public comment period for draft policy 4.1.1. The public comment period closes on November 14, 2025. No public comments have been received to date.
- DMAS Behavioral Health Redesign Update – Laura Reed, SLAT representative from DMAS, provided an update on the DMAS Behavioral Health Redesign Project. Ms. Reed reported that the project is scheduled for implementation on July 1, 2026, and noted that draft policies are currently posted on the DMAS website for informal public comment.

## **SEC Report**

Mills Jones provided an update on the following items from the SEC's September 11, 2025, meeting, noting that Ms. Bacote had already presented the policy updates:

- Dr. Samantha Hollins, Deputy Superintendent for Special Education and Specialized Populations with the DOE, provided an update on special education and the use of private day schools for special education services.
- The September recipient of the Excellence in CSA Award was the Lunenburg County CSA Program. The award established in March 2025, recognizes a local CSA programs' commitment to positively impacting the lives of children, youth, and families through collaboration, authentic engagement, and systems of care.

## **OCS Update**

Ms. Bacote provided an updates on the following:

- Members received a copy of the Office of Children's Services (OCS) FY 2025 Data Summary. The service with the highest expenditures was Private Day Special Education Schools with 45%; greatest census was Intensive In-Home/Mentoring/Behavioral Therapies/Parent Coaching/Assessment with 66%.
- The Annual CSA Conference was held in Roanoke October 15-16, 2025. SEC member Melvin Roy was the keynote speaker. Ms. Bell informed the members that 529 participants were in attendance.
- Two localities (Wise County and City of Hopewell) were invited to pilot a half-day virtual workshop on November 5, 2025. Strengthening Systems of Care: Connecting People, Purpose, and Practice will focus on supporting CPMT members to improve their capacity for collaboration, support, and adaptive leadership.
- Beginning in January 2026, OCS will offer a Virtual CSA Academy eight-session learning series designed to support CPMT members and those who supervise CSA Coordinators. Over 120 individuals registered during the first week that registration was open.
- OCS Office Hours resumed in September; will be taking time off for November and December. Office Hours will begin again on January 16, 2026.
- Gezelle Glasgow was introduced as the new Administrative Manager for OCS

## **New Business**

- Mr. Jones provided an update regarding the impact of the special education rate cap under CSA. A survey of local CSA offices was conducted with 48 local programs responding. In some instances, special education day rates exceeded the allowable 5% increase, between 6% and 15%. Some localities have terminated contracts with providers exceeding the cap, while others have successfully negotiated more favorable rates.
- Mr. Jones requested that SLAT members email either him or Kristi Schabo with any proposed agenda items for future SLAT discussions. Ms. Lesley Abashian also highlighted the importance of localities utilizing available services to support youth who have aged out of traditional service programs.
- Lesley Abashian recommended hearing a presentation on the Opioid Abatement Program.

**Member Updates**

Members reported for their agencies and organizations on their projects, new programs, other ongoing activities and workforce issues. Members continue to work within their agencies and advocate through their associations for improvements to services and service delivery for Virginia's children, youth, and families.

Members commented that the CSA Conference was both insightful and informative, expressing enthusiasm about the opportunity to attend again next year.

Judge Goss reported that National Adoption Day is November 22, 2025 and invited members to attend a celebration at the Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Shannon Updike reported that VCOPPA Critical Issues Symposium will be on December 9 -10, 2025 in Richmond and invited members to attend.

**Adjournment**

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m. on a motion by Lesley Abashian, seconded by Shannon Updike and carried. The next meeting is scheduled for February 5, 2026.