

**DECAL - Bright from the Start**

**Meeting Minutes**

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**Board of Early Care and Learning Meeting  
2/21/2013 9:00:00 AM**

Twin Tower - East Tower, 8th Floor, Oak Room  
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. SE, Atlanta, GA  
30334

Bobby D. Cagle, Commissioner

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No Attendees

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Victor Morgan called the meeting to order. He welcomed board members, Department of Early Care and Learning staff, and guests.

**2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

- a. \*Approve agenda for 2/21/13 meeting

Kay Ford moved to accept the day's agenda. Susan Harper seconded. The agenda was unanimously accepted.

- b. \*Approve minutes from 11/15/12 board meeting

Phil Davis moved to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2012, meeting of the board. Kay Ford seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved. Ira Sudman reminded the board of the changes to the board's ethics bylaws approved for review at the previous meeting. Phil Davis motioned to accept the recommended bylaw revisions. Kay Ford seconded. Ethics bylaw revisions were unanimously approved.

**3. Board Inspiration**

Luann Purcell presented an inspirational video from Simple Truths on "The Butterfly Effect" to remind board members that "everything we do matters."

**4. Board Member Updates**

Members of the board provided updates on their activities.

- Luann Purcell reported on speaking to children in Russia and meeting with Senator Tolleson. She expressed her pride in the national spotlight given to Georgia's Pre-K Program.
- Susan Harper reported on a women's club meeting where she commented on findings from the Rollins Center on how many fewer vocabulary words are heard by children in poverty in their early years. She also reported the Lee County School System is very excited to be receiving an additional Pre-K classroom.

- Kay Ford reported participating in meetings of the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce as they drafted their legislative wish list to present to the General Assembly.
- Victor Morgan reported visiting Little River Elementary in Cherokee County where Georgia's Pre-K Program, Head Start, and special needs services are offered in the same center.

## 5. Bright from the Start Presentations

### a. Commissioner's Updates

1. Commissioner Bobby Cagle presented updates on his activities. He offered reflections on his experience during President Obama's visit to a Georgia's Pre-K Program. The state is proud that Georgia's Pre-K Program was mentioned in the State of the Union address. He reported on the All Staff Meeting held in December. Donna Lowry from 11 Alive News presented a motivational message to department staff. Staff feedback on the meeting has been very positive. He also presented the agency's priorities: health and safety, quality, and organizational excellence. He reported the agency has seen a reduction in incidents of children being left on a vehicle following heightened enforcement of transportation rules. He commented on the need for an education campaign to eliminate crushed fingers in early learning facilities. He stated the department is expanding its stakeholder engagement efforts through advisory committees and greater transparency.
2. The Commissioner introduced Keith Bostick to the board and presented the department's updated organizational structure. Ray Higgins has been named Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, and Keith Bostick has been named Deputy Commissioner for Programs. In addition, the Head Start State Collaboration Office has been moved directly under the Commissioner due to the importance of Head Start and to better facilitate collaboration between state and federal efforts. Georgia aims to be the first state with complete data sharing with its Head Start programs.
3. Susan Harper asked about a recent report questioning the effectiveness of Head Start. The Commissioner responded that quality varies widely across Head Start centers in the state, much as Pre-K programs and child care centers vary. He stated he is interested in the President's proposal regarding Head Start funding and pointed out the Governor has long advocated for states to be placed in charge of administering Head Start. Bentley Ponder reported there were some problems with the Head Start study's methodology.

### b. Pre-K Update

1. Susan Adams presented updates on Pre-K. (See slides.) She reported on the development of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). The GELDS website is scheduled to launch February 22 for public review of the proposed standards.
2. Ms. Adams and Dr. Ponder presented first year findings from the Pre-K Longitudinal Study conducted by lead researchers at the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The study finds that Georgia's Pre-K Program produces positive child

outcomes, with larger gains than would be expected of a typically developing child. However, greater supports for dual language learners may be needed, and classroom quality falls in the medium range and can be improved. Kay Ford asked whether children who come in well below the national norm are brought to the national norm or remain behind. Dr. Ponder responded they show excellent growth but not enough to catch up completely; therefore, it is important to look at what children receive before entering Pre-K. Susan Harper asked for elaboration on local school system settings being a higher predictor of children's outcomes. Researchers are looking further at the data to explain why this may be. Phil Davis inquired whether "medium" quality is normative or relative to other states. Dr. Ponder responded the quality scales are normative according to the instruments typically used in the early learning field; however, questions related to the adequacy of these instruments to measure quality exist. Mr. Davis followed up by asking if Georgia's quality is competitive with other states; Dr. Ponder responded that for a universal program that is the case. Kay Ford sought to confirm that classroom quality was not correlated with child outcomes in this study. As measured by the ECERS-R and CLASS, there was not a wide range of quality measured, which could have impacted the results.

#### c. Child Care Services Update

1. Keith Bostick presented updates on Child Care Services (CCS). (See slides.) He stated the basic health and safety of children provides the support needed on which quality programs can be built. He announced Kristie Lewis has been named the new Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services.
2. Mr. Bostick presented data related to CCS monitoring activities. He reported on revocation notices delivered to facilities for failure to pay their license fee. He also presented proposed changes to improve health and safety, including a timeline for revising the safe sleep rule, support for a legislative bill to require national fingerprint checks on all child care employees, and enforcing federal crib standards. He announced plans for a department rules committee to regularly review rules.
3. Luann Purcell pointed out that the license fees do not go to DECAL, although collecting the fees requires considerable expense and resources on the part of the department. Phil Davis inquired whether the effort to collect license fees could be served by local sheriff's offices. Mr. Sudman responded this is possible but would require the department to pay them a fee. Mr. Bostick commented the agency prefers to reserve its use of local law enforcement for when adverse actions must be taken. Commissioner Cagle stated that board members will see greater action taken on enforcing health and safety rules.

#### d. Break

#### e. Quality Initiatives Update

1. Carol Hartman presented updates on Quality Initiatives. (See slides.) She stated that over 1,100 programs (19% of all regulated programs) serving over 83,000 children have applied to participate in Quality Rated, the state's quality rating and improvement system. Twelve programs have received a quality rating. Ms. Hartman reviewed Georgia's collaboration

with the BUILD Initiative. Georgia's technical assistance priorities through BUILD include setting tiered reimbursement rates, examining child care financing, developing cultural competency standards for early care and learning settings, and ensuring the durability of the system. Board members were invited to a March 6 child care finance meeting, where Anne Mitchell of Early Childhood Policy Research will present on cost modeling in the child care industry and its connection to tiered reimbursement. Ms. Hartman also reported on a recent meeting with Administration for Children and Families officials to discuss department initiatives.

f. Media Activity Update

1. Reg Griffin presented updates on media activity related to the agency. (See slides.) He reported on media placements from November through February, which included no negative placements. Stories skyrocketed with the President's recent reference to Georgia's Pre-K Program in the State of the Union address and his subsequent visit to Georgia. Other top stories included the Pre-K Longitudinal Study, national fingerprint checks, and the Dole Foods Healthy Kids Georgia partnership. Mr. Griffin also presented on the agency's social media activities through Facebook and Twitter. A video segment from CBS Atlanta News on national fingerprint background checks was shown. Mr. Griffin expressed appreciation for the occasions when stakeholders and representatives from the industry back up the agency on its message. He also presented on the agency's collaboration with other state agencies through the Alliance of Education Agency Heads. Finally, Mr. Griffin presented an overview of the agency's communications plan, including key audiences, factors to consider, and key messages. He encouraged board members in their role as public messengers for the agency's work. A document highlighting key messages will be distributed to all board members.

g. Finance & Legislative Updates

1. Margie Landers presented updates on the department's finances. (See slides.) She reviewed year-to-date expenditures. The agency is on track for the year although funds are tight. She did note that current expenditures include future encumbrances. A 3% reduction in state funds for 2013 is being managed with minimal impact. The only expected changes for the fiscal year 2014 budget are funding for an additional 10 days to the Pre-K school year and funding for additional Pre-K Category One transportation services.
2. Commissioner Bobby Cagle presented updates on agency legislation. (See slides.) Proposed legislation includes child safety improvements, in particular the national fingerprint-based background checks, and administrative and housekeeping changes, in particular confirming the agency's statutory authority to manage child care subsidies. Kay Ford inquired about receiving an agency legislative wish list for which board members could begin advocating. The Commissioner replied the agency is not able to publicly comment on proposals prior to an approval process, but a list of some talking points can be provided.
3. Mark Waits reported the agency has submitted recommendations for board member appointments to the Governor's office. However, the office

is overwhelmed in making new appointments statewide due to congressional redistricting.

## **6. Lunch & Committee Meetings**

Committee meetings were held in separate rooms over lunch. All committee meetings are open to the public.

## **7. Public Hearing, 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

At 1:00 p.m. a public hearing was held before the board. A summary of comments follows.

1. Hows King, Georgia Child Care Association, expressed appreciation to agency staff for responding to provider concerns regarding the proposed national fingerprint legislation, commenting that this collaborative effort created a stronger bill. He also communicated his willingness as a child care owner to participate in the agency's crushed finger prevention campaign.
2. Santrecheel Julian, Real Talk: Stand Up for Parents Initiative (Project South), commented on the need to create better access to child care and child care subsidies. She stated CAPS information is often unavailable to low-income parents of color, many of whom do not have access to the Internet. Her organization wishes to ensure the concerns of low-income parents are heard by the agency.

## **8. Committee Reports**

### **a. Budget & Finance**

Carlene Talton reported for the Budget and Finance Committee. The committee reviewed current year expenditures.

### **b. Programs & Rules Committee**

Victor Morgan reported for the Programs Committee. The committee discussed the presidential visit, the Pre-K Longitudinal Study, the reorganization of Child Care Services staff, efforts to make technical assistance for noncompliant programs more effective, and the draft report of the CAPS audit. Copies of the Pre-K year one evaluation report were distributed to board members.

### **c. Ethics**

- a. Susan Harper reported for the Ethics Committee. The committee discussed the closed meeting bylaws approval and a process for reviewing the remaining board bylaws. Department staff will review the bylaws and make recommendations to the Ethics Committee at the rate of three per meeting. These bylaws are related only to how the board operates; they are not rules for child care programs.

**9. Adjournment**

Chair Victor Morgan adjourned the meeting at 1:32 p.m.

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Board Chair

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Board Secretary