
Board of Early Care and Learning

Board of Early Care and Learning Meeting

Thursday, May 14, 2015, 9:00 a.m.

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department
of Early Care and Learning
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE – East Tower, Oak Room
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Amy Jacobs, Commissioner

Meeting Minutes

Board Members

Victor Morgan, Board Chair
Susan Harper, Board Secretary
Phil Davis
Kay Ford
Janice Gallimore
Dawn Henderson

Tangela Johnson
Tammy Lenkeit
Sherron Murphy
Judy Neal
Carlene Talton

Public Guests

Melissa Fincher, Georgia Department of Education
Lynn Manfredi/Petitt
Jan Reyes, Georgia Department of Education

William Willoughby, Governor's Office of Planning and
Budget

Bright from the Start Staff

Amy Jacobs, Commissioner
Susan Adams, Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K and
Instructional Supports
Deidria Bolden, Assistant Commissioner for Federal
Programs and Administration
Kristin Bernhard, Deputy Commissioner for System
Reform
Craig Detweiler, Chief Information Officer
Reg Griffin, Chief Communications Officer
Ray Higgins, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and
Administration
Kristie Lewis, Assistant Commissioner for Child Care
Services
Ira Sudman, Chief Legal Officer

Sarah Beck, System Reform Coordinator
Woody Dover, Budget Administrator
Sharon McPherson, Accounting Manager
Rob O'Callaghan, Research and Evaluation Specialist
Lisa Rambhajan, Information Technology Assistant
Stacey Schaff, Family Engagement Specialist
Pam Stevens, Quality Rated Director
Robin Stevens, Human Resources Director
Mark Waits, Special Assistant to the Commissioner
Liz Young, Director of Government Relations and
Special Projects

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

Phil Davis moved to accept the day's agenda. Janice Gallimore seconded. The agenda was unanimously accepted. Kay Ford moved to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2015, meeting of the board. Dawnn Henderson seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Inspiration

For inspiration, Sherron Murphy shared the poem "To Be of Use" by Marge Piercy.

4. Board Member Updates

Members of the board provided updates on their activities.

- Kay Ford reported reading in three child care centers during the Read Across Georgia campaign.
- Susan Harper reported visiting a child care center in Albany and helping the owner get assistance from the department. She also reported on her work on the educational component of Georgia's faith-based alliance.
- Dawnn Henderson reported reading in a Marietta Pre-K program.
- Janice Gallimore reported the charter school she helped start in Greene County was awarded a Blue Ribbon.
- Sherron Murphy reported reading at a three-star center in Duluth.
- Tangela Johnson reported reading to children in a local library and hearing the Commissioner speak at a Kiwanis Club meeting.

5. Bright from the Start Presentations

Members of the executive staff provided updates on their program areas.

- Commissioner's Update:** Commissioner Amy Jacobs presented updates on her activities. (See slides.) She reported on the Early Childhood Education Subcommittee she is chairing under the Governor's Education Reform Commission. It is composed of 21 members. Preliminary recommendations related to Pre-K have been completed, including increasing teacher salaries and reducing the class size to 20. She reported on current fiscal year special allotment funding for Georgia's Pre-K classrooms. She announced that the Nutrition Services division received the *Phoenix Award* from Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, the city's highest award, as well as the *Let's Move! Child Care Recognition Award*. In addition, she reported the department was a bronze winner in Georgia's annual *Telly Awards* for its 2014 Look Again public awareness campaign. The 2015 Look Again campaign will kick off in June. The Commissioner reported attending the Georgia Head Start Association Spring Training and will present to the Georgia Lottery Corporation Sales Conference in June.
- Finance and Legislative Update:** Ray Higgins presented updates on the department's finances and potential legislation affecting the department. (See slides.) He reported expenditures are on track for the 2015 fiscal year. He stated there is a possibility the department will have lottery funds to return to the state at the end of the fiscal year. He presented highlights of the fiscal year 2016 budget. He reported on the passage of the department's legislation, House Bill 401, and other legislation of interest passed or considered by the Georgia General Assembly.
- Information Technology Update:** Craig Detweiler presented on creating a data driven culture within state government. (See slides). He discussed the difference between operational and longitudinal data systems. He presented benefits of developing an operational system through the example of KOALA, the Child Care Services data system. The calendaring system, consultant dashboard, and reports that have been developed in KOALA allow for monitoring progress on visits in real time. Automated functions have been created to generate emails, facilitate the adverse action process, and determine compliance. The department is currently phasing in provider self-service for updating information, paying license fees, and submitting criminal records checks. Through these developments, technology is assisting with program management.

d. Child Care Services Update: Kristie Lewis presented updates on Child Care Services (CCS). (See slides.) She reported on the impact of House Bill 401 on Child Care Services. Changes include merging group homes with child care centers, changing the name of Family Day Care Home to Family Child Care Learning Home, and adding a category of permit for short-term needs. She requested authority from the board for the department to begin rewriting its rules to conform to the new law.

- i. Victor Morgan sought a motion to grant the requested authority. Susan Harper motioned. Sherron Murphy seconded. The board voted and unanimously granted authority to the department to draft or modify rules to comply with House Bill 401.

Ms. Lewis presented current statistics from Child Care Services, including number of licensed facilities and number of visits conducted. She reported final 2014 license fee collection statistics. She stated the department has seen a decline in the number of licensed programs over the last five years and is, with the help of researchers at Georgia State University, analyzing data on program closures. She reported the department's annual customer service survey this year will focus specifically on child care licensing. She reported the department continues to contact exempt programs requesting them to reapply under the 2012 exemptions rule.

Ms. Lewis presented on the development of a new enforcement and compliance system to be implemented July 1, 2016. The department convened an Enforcement Task Force with wide representation that met extensively to create the new system. The proposed system has been tested for its potential impact using 8,000 visit records within the department's data. It determines compliance based on a rolling 12-month period looking back from the most recent visit. The new enforcement chart includes three components: the violation class, measuring severity; the violation history level, measuring repeat violations over the previous 12 months; and the determination of enforcement actions. Enforcement categories include "Good Standing," "Support," and "Deficient," replacing current categories of "Compliant" and "Non-compliant."

e. Federal Programs Update: Deidria Bolden presented updates on federal programs. (See slides.) She reported the number of sites and meals served in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the 2015 goals for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). She presented activities on increasing SFSP awareness with the support of First Lady Sandra Deal and invited board members to participate. Unserved counties from 2014 are being targeted. As part of the outreach efforts, mini-grants are being offered to sponsors who go into these counties.

Ms. Bolden presented counts of children, families, and child care programs participating in Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) thru January 2015, as well as participation in tiered reimbursement incentives for Quality Rated programs. Subsidy projects through the Early Learning Challenge include subsidy grant agreements, which offer an alternative CAPS funding mechanism, and family co-pay incentives in the Early Education Empowerment Zones.

f. Family Engagement Update: Stacey Schaff presented updates on family engagement. (See slides.) She reported outcomes of the department's Family Engagement Task Force established in September 2014. The task force of 55 participants included stakeholders serving children and families. The task force worked to apply a family engagement framework to Quality Rated and develop a statewide family engagement strategy.

g. Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports Update: Susan Adams presented updates on Georgia's Pre-K Program. (See slides.) She announced that the 2015 Summer Transition Program (STP), a six-week school readiness program, includes 80 classes for children transitioning to Kindergarten and 30 classes for Spanish-speaking children entering Pre-K in the fall. An ongoing evaluation of the STP is conducted by researchers at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is used to measure teacher-child interactions. The 2014 evaluation found high scores for the Emotional Support and Classroom Organization domains of the CLASS, while scores for the Instructional Support domain were in the middle range for Rising Kindergarten and in the low range in Rising Pre-K. National scores for Instructional Support are typically low. In Rising Pre-K classes, instruction occurs in English and Spanish. Parent comments about the programs were positive and provided additional evidence for their educational impact. Board members were invited to visit STP classes this summer.

h. Kindergarten Entry Profile Update: Dr. Jan Reyes, Assessment Specialist at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), presented updates on the development of the Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP), a component of Georgia's Early Learning Challenge. (See slides.) She reported the KEP is intended to assess students in the first six weeks of Kindergarten, informing teacher instruction and providing data on Kindergarten

readiness. It will augment and be an additional component of the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS), a formative assessment. Essential skills and concepts for children entering Kindergarten were first identified. Based on these findings, a development committee composed of teachers, an early childhood expert, and GaDOE and DECAL staff developed a blueprint for the KEP. Activities were piloted in April and May, and data will be reviewed by the committee in June. A field test will take place in 25 Kindergarten classrooms in the fall. Another field test will occur in Pre-K classrooms in spring 2016, with an operational launch in a sample of classrooms in Fall 2016 and full implementation in 2017. Susan Harper commented she has heard concern about the additional time for assessment that will be required of Kindergarten teachers. Susan Adams replied the KEP looks at items teachers are already collecting for instruction but standardizes these items. She stated the department and GaDOE understand that sometimes assessments are delivered differently in schools, and both departments are working on communication to teachers and school systems.

- i. **System Reform Update:** Kristin Bernhard presented updates on System Reform. (See slides.) She presented an overview of the 12 projects within the Early Learning Challenge and reported on Project One, Grant Management. Georgia's Annual Performance Report for 2014 was initially submitted in February and received positive feedback. Responses to clarification questions were submitted May 1. She reported on program participation in Quality Rated as part of Project Three, Quality Rated Access and Availability, including distribution of a map of rated programs in Georgia by county. Recruitment efforts are targeting the 12 counties with licensed child care that do not yet have participation in Quality Rated. (One county, Webster, has no licensed care.) She commented the Early Learning Challenge has been integrated across the work of the department as well as in partnerships with other state agencies.

6. Committee Meetings and Lunch

Victor Morgan dismissed board committees for their meetings. Committee meetings were held in separate rooms over lunch. All committee meetings are open to the public.

7. Committee Reports

Committees reported on their work.

- a. **Budget & Finance:** Carlene Talton reported for the Budget and Finance Committee. The committee reviewed the fiscal year 2015 and fiscal year 2016 budgets.
- b. **Programs & Rules:** Sherron Murphy reported for the Programs Committee. The committee discussed outreach for the Summer Food Service Program, the Early Education Empowerment Zone grants and incentives for Quality Rated, and participation in SCHOLARSHIPS and INCENTIVES.
- c. **System Reform:** Susan Harper reported for the System Reform Committee. The committee discussed the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership, which will begin offering services through two hubs in July. The committee also discussed teacher training for pre-learning skills in language and math for children ages birth to three, and the Early Childhood Education Subcommittee's exploration of ways to compensate low-paid teachers in early learning through tax credits for individuals and businesses.

8. Board Elections

Elections for board officers were held. Phil Davis motioned to allow Commissioner Jacobs to facilitate the election for board chair. Kay Ford seconded. Commissioner Jacobs stated Victor Morgan has indicated his willingness to serve another term as board chair. She asked if there were any other nominations for board chair. There were no more nominations made. Susan Harper motioned to close nominations. Phil Davis seconded. The Board unanimously agreed to close the nominations. Victor Morgan was congratulated as the chair of the Board of Early Care and Learning. The Commissioner returned the meeting to Victor Morgan as presiding officer.

Victor Morgan stated the board would seek nominations for vice chair of the board. Janice Gallimore nominated Susan Harper for vice chair. Carlene Talton motioned to close nominations. Phil Davis seconded. The Board unanimously agreed to close the nominations. Susan Harper was congratulated as the new vice chair of the Board of Early Care and Learning.

Victor Morgan stated the board would seek nominations for secretary of the board. Carlen Talton nominated Kay Ford. Janice Gallimore motioned to close nominations. Dawnn Henderson seconded. The Board unanimously agreed to close the nominations. Kay Ford was congratulated as the new secretary of the Board of Early Care and Learning.

Victor Morgan thanked the Board and congratulated the new officers. He reminded board members that new officers will assume their responsibilities at the August board meeting.

9. Public Comments

A time for public comment to the board was made available. There were no comments to report.

10. Adjournment

Mark Waits requested board members check the expiration dates for their IDs in order to replace those that expire before the next meeting. Commissioner Jacobs presented the new Pre-K book, developed by the Rollins Center at the Atlanta Speech School to place an emphasis on language development. Board members were invited to take a box of books to give away to child care programs.

The next meeting of the board will take place August 20, 2015. Victor Morgan adjourned the meeting at 1 p.m.