

Board of Early Care and Learning
Meeting Summary
February 18, 2016

Attendees

Board Members: Victor Morgan, Susan Harper, Kay Ford, Phil Davis, Dawnn Henderson, Kathy Howell, Jerri Kropp, Sherron Murphy, Luanne Purcell, Carlene Talton

Guests: *Melissa Johnson, Joe Perreault, William Willoughby, Revette Thomas*

Bright from the Start Staff: Commissioner Amy Jacobs, Susan Adams, Kristin Bernhard, Christie Bearden, Brian Collin, Craig Detweiler, Reg Griffin, Ray Higgins, Kristie Lewis, Woody Dover, Falita Flowers, Janice Haker, Carol Hartman, Sharon McPherson, Christi Moore, Meghan Pendergast, Pam Stevens, Robin Stevens, Laura Wagner, Mark Waits

The first meeting of the Board of Early Care and Learning in 2016 opened with the approval of the day's agenda and the November 11, 2015, board meeting minutes. Inspiration was given by Susan Harper.

Board Chair Victor Morgan announced Sherron Murphy's resignation from the board to take a position as director of the new Early Childhood Education Center at Johns Hopkins University. Victor read and presented Sherron with a commendation from Governor Deal.

A presentation about the Child Fatality Review Panel was made by Trebor Randle on child fatalities in Georgia in 2014. Emphasis was placed on education and prevention of sleep related deaths.

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

- Commissioner Amy Jacobs presented the Governor's FY2017 budget recommendations. She announced updates to Pre-K funding and DECAL events such as the new Pre-K teacher of the year, Read Across Georgia, and Children's Day at the Capitol.
- Ray Higgins, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, presented on current fiscal year expenditures and gave a legislative update. He reported that the department is monitoring House Bill 915 and 905 and Senate Bill 310.
- Kristin Bernhard, Deputy Commissioner for System Reform, updated the board on Quality Rated participation and ratings. She discussed key changes in the Quality Rated Manual and announced that stand-alone school-age programs can now submit a Quality Rated portfolio. A timeline for the Quality Rated marketing campaign was presented.
- Janice Haker, Head Start State Collaboration Director, discussed an ongoing study of child attendance and toxic stress in Head Start. She also discussed a recent presentation she made at the National Head Start Association Conference.
- Kristie Lewis, Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services, presented updates on the Child Care and Development Fund State Plan. She also reminded the board that DECAL is currently revising licensing rules and regulations related to enforcement actions and compliance and related to changes mandated by CCDF reauthorization that the Board will be asked to act on at the May meeting.
- Susan Adams, Assistant Commissioner for Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports, discussed grant applications for summer transition programs and DECAL SCHOLARS programs.
- Falita Flowers Nutrition Services Director, discussed recommended changes, program expansion, and the new media campaign for the Summer Food Service Program.
- Christie Bearden, Legal, presented on the advancements of DECAL Koala and new policy in relation to criminal background checks. DECAL Koala created an online tool so providers can submit registered background check applications for online processing. Other notable changes: Notary requirements were eliminated so background checks can now be submitted online. Parents and grandparents no longer need to be fingerprinted to volunteer in a classroom.

Board committees met during lunch.

Committee chairs presented their reports:

- Carlene Talton reported for the Budget and Finance Committee. She reported that everything was great.
- Sherron Murphy reported for the Programs and Rules Committee. Ms. Murphy discussed how the increase in Pre-K funding can be used to improve quality. She emphasized the importance of cross-departmental communication to best utilize these funds. She thanked the board for letting her serve. Dr. Jerri Kropp will replace Ms. Murphy as the chair for the Programs and Rules committee.
- Susan Harper reported for the System Reform Committee. She mentioned that Early Head Start has a limited number of spaces available, and there is a need for a pilot to assess where Head Start services will be most effective. The committee discussed that school age programs in child care are now eligible to participate in Quality Rated.

Public Comments:

Dr. Revette Thomas, from Totally Committed Inc. (TCI), reported on several incidences of alleged child abuse by a Pre-K lead teacher, while serving as his/her assistant at a La Petite Academy. She mentioned that despite reporting the incidents to DECAL, there has yet to be any action taken against the child care facility.

Closing Remarks:

Board Liaison Mark Waits discussed the results of a recent survey on the content and format of the board meetings. He mentioned that the responses with the current content and format were generally positive. He also informed the board that before the next board meeting he will send each board member the board self-assessment instrument to determine the board's effectiveness for the past year.

Victor Morgan asked if there were any more questions or comments before the meeting was adjourned.

Luanne Purcell praised DECAL for its success in cross-departmental communication.

Victor Morgan mentioned that the next meeting of the Board of Early Care and Learning will take place May 12, 2016. The meeting was then adjourned at 1:19 p.m.