
Board of Early Care and Learning

Board of Early Care and Learning Meeting
Thursday, May 12, 2016, 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 M. Jacobs, Commissioner

Meeting Minutes

Board Members

Victor Morgan, Board Chair
Susan Harper, Board Vice Chair
Phil Davis
Dawnn Henderson
Kathy Howell

Jerri Kropp
Luanne Purcell
Carlene Talton
Sheri Hooper
Tangela Johnson

Public Guests

Melissa Johnson
Joe Perreault
Brian Lipton
Lynn Manfredi Petitt

Ellen Whitlock
Mindy Binderman
Wande Meadows

Bright from the Start Staff

Amy Jacobs, Commissioner
Susan Adams, Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K and
Instructional Supports
Kristin Bernhard, Deputy Commissioner for System
Reform
Christie Bearden, Legal Services Supervisor
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

Brian Collin, Research and Policy Analyst
Meghan Pendergast, Research and Policy Analyst
Woody Dover, Budget Administrator
Shani Drake, Nutrition Services Program Marketing and
Outreach Manager
Carol Hartman, Policy and System Reform Director
Sharon McPherson, Accounting Manager
Laura Wagner, Early Education Empowerment Zone
Director
Bentley Ponder, Research and Policy Analysis Director
Mark Waits, Special Assistant to the Commissioner
Christi Moore, Director of Professional Learning

1. Call to Order

Board 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

Dawnn Henderson moved to accept the day's agenda. Kathy Howell seconded. The agenda was unanimously accepted. Susan Harper moved to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2016, meeting of the board. Phil Davis seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Inspiration

Susan Harper shared a reading about time and the importance of valuing time in our lives.

4. Board Member Updates

Sheri Hooper, the newest board member representing the Ninth Congressional District, introduced herself.

Luann Purcell reported speaking at the Professional Family Child Care Home Alliance in Warner Robins

Susan Harper reported attending the Blueprint for Change meeting conducted by the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services in Albany. She also commended Soraya Kimbrel, the director of the CCR&R in that area.

5. Bright from the Start Presentations

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

1. **Commissioner's Update:** Commissioner Amy Jacobs introduced Elisabetta Kasfir as the new Assistant Commissioner for Federal Programs. Commissioner Jacobs presented basic information about DECAL's Strategic Plan through 2020 (see slides). BUILD, an early care and education advocacy group, facilitated initial meetings about the plan. DECAL is now soliciting feedback from the staff, board, and stakeholders. DECAL has partnered with GSU for the DECAL Employee and Customer surveys 2016 (see slides). This year's customer survey will focus on Family Child Care Learning Homes. Commissioner Jacobs discussed her recent interactions with stakeholders which included professional conferences, and she shared an overview of current messages (see slides). She announced that DECAL rated its 1,000th program, a 3-star family child care learning home. She announced the name of the 1,000th rated program and recognized its director, Lynn Manfredi/Petitt, who accepted educational materials from GEEARS and DECAL
2. **Finance, Administration, and Legislative Update:** Ray Higgins presented updates on the department's current fiscal year expenditures and gave a legislative update (see slides). He reported the passing of House Bill 905, pertaining to the child abuse registry, into law. He mentioned that an extra 36.4 million dollars were provided in lottery funds to increase teacher compensation by 3% for all teachers. He also reported on upcoming changes to the CAPS program. There were funding restrictions that prevented a large number of children from receiving CAPS, but recently the restrictions were lifted. Now, over 50,000 children in Georgia are receiving CAPS. Mr. Higgins introduced Rian Ringsrud, the director of audits and compliance, who discussed the goals of the audits and compliance division (see slides). The audits and compliance unit started in 2013 to ensure that providers follow the business rules associated with receiving government funding. The audits and compliance division recouped 3.6 million in improper payments (see slides). Following the presentation Phil Davis asked about how providers are audited. Mr. Ringsrud indicated that the goal of the division is to assume all providers are following the rules associated with receiving government funds and to identify the small percentage of providers who are improperly spending funds.
3. **Nutrition Services Update:** Shani Drake, the marketing and outreach manager, presented updates on Nutrition Services (see slides). Ms. Drake reported on the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Ms. Drake reported that programs are using GA ATLAS, Nutrition Services new computer program that allows, among other functionalities, a sponsor to complete one application for CACFP and SFSP. Nutrition Services is collaborating with new partners to educate people about the resources available with SFSP. Issued a joint letter with DOE to targeted counties (counties where there were no SFSP or Seamless summer programs). These nine counties are being targeted to encourage summer meals program in either programs. A letter was sent from Commissioner Jacobs and the commissioner of DOE to participate. So far, 5 out of the 9 counties have indicated that they will participate in SFSP or SFO for 2016. There will be multiple summer meals kickoffs. Ms. Drake provided a website and phone numbers to text to provide the nearest meal sites for families. Phil Davis asked if there were specific characteristics to the nine counties that were not participating. Ms. Drake said there was no specific reasons why they were not participating. Susan Harper surmised that it was due to the rural demographics of these counties. Ms. Drake responded that they wanted to highlight mobile meals twice so that it can target the rural areas and said that it has typically worked well in rural areas.
4. **Child Care Services Update:** Kristie Lewis presented updates on Child Care Services (CCS) and the Exemptions for licensing (see slides). She discussed the history of exemptions. Exemption rules were created in 2010 to help provide more guidelines for exempt programs (see slides). This summer DECAL will work to get a better idea about exemptions in Georgia. She mentioned that exemptions come in many different forms (e.g., faith-based programs, mother's morning out, half-day programs). CCS will attempt to visit between 600-700 programs to determine if they are operating within the exemption approval and to collect data on certain health and safety

aspects as required by CCDF reauthorization. She mentioned the board will vote at the end of the meeting on enforcement and compliance rule changes in regard to statewide community forums, training to individual provider groups, and visits. The revisions to the rules on emergency preparedness required by CCDF reauthorization will be voted on at the August 2016 board meeting.

5. **Communications Update:** Reg Griffin presented updates on communications and gave an overview of DECAL's media coverage (see slides). He demonstrated the new DECAL webpage and updated DECAL's social media outreach indicating that the department's total social media reach is 8,114. This reach allows DECAL to tell their own story rather than relying on the media to tell the story. Mr. Griffin played a video of CALi's visit to a child care center. Mr. Griffin explained that the mascot helps people understand who we are and who our demographics are (young children). He showed the recent public service announcement *Look Again* featuring the Governor, the First Lady, and Commissioner Jacobs that encourages parents to look again before leaving their child in a car. Phil Davis asked if there were significant differences about who is asking for media requests (lifestyle vs education reporters). Mr. Griffin responded that typically local media don't have a reporter dedicated to education, so the challenge is to educate reporters.
6. **System Reform Update:** Kristin Bernhard presented updates on System Reform (see slides). Ms. Bernhard played the new Quality Rated PSA video that will soon air on television in four weeks. The Quality Rated public awareness campaign, conducted in conjunction with Family Connection Partnership and GEEARS, will help inform families about indicators of quality child care and what a Quality Rated star-rating means. Once the free airtime is used, DECAL will look into purchasing ad space for social media. Ms. Bernhard updated the board on participation and ratings in Quality Rated and noted that almost 57% of eligible child care facilities in Georgia are now participating in Quality Rated. She also showed the percent of CAPS certificates in Quality Rated programs. She reviewed the Quality Rated Subsidy Grants. Mrs. Bernhard introduced Wande Okunorean-Meadows, who spoke about her experience as a subsidy grant recipient, and how the grant has helped her program in Clayton County. The funds helped the program purchase basic technology items, create competitive wages, allow more teachers in the classroom, and work on activities to increase parental engagement. Phil Davis asked if Ms. Okunorean-Meadows thought parents were taking what they learned home. Ms. Okunorean-Meadows said that parents have changed the way they talk to the kids based on what has been modeled in the classroom by the teachers.
7. **Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports Update:** Susan Adams presented updates on Georgia's Pre-K Program and Instructional Supports (see slides). Ms. Adams reported on this year's Rising Kindergarten Summer Transition Program for which Pre-K programs can apply. She clarified that the Summer Transition Program for Rising Pre-K students is for children whose home language is Spanish. Child care programs are invited to apply for/participate in the Rising Pre-K Summer Transition Program, which will be held in 42 classes in 17 counties. Ms. Adams also announced the first ever, DECAL Pre-K teachers of the year competition. Six finalists were chosen, and DECAL will choose one teacher from each program type (public and private). This competition is being funded by private sponsors. Susan Harper asked about the waiting list in Albany and if the new budget funding will give any more spots for Pre-K. Ms. Adams said the budget increases were strictly for teacher pay and program quality increases. However, every year there are classes that might have turnover which could lead to program openings. Ms. Adams said she can't say for sure that there will be new classes, but typically, there are openings. Ms. Adams then reported on Instructional Supports. Ms. Adams reviewed the Family Engagement Grants that were awarded to Family Connection Partnership collaboratives (see slides). Twenty-one communities were awarded grants and a second round of funding will begin June 2016. Ms. Adams reviewed the GaPDS, the new online system for the Professional Development Registry (see slides). Dr. Christi Moore provided an overview of the GaPDS website and demonstrated its functionality. Dr. Bentley Ponder presented the findings from the Race to the Top Professional Development Study and its implications. Susan opened the floor for questions. Phil Davis asked if DECAL was doing more work in house rather than searching for external contractors. Ms. Adams responded that DECAL does a good job of partnering with outside agencies that are experts in the field in order to set up long term in house projects. Tangela Johnson mentioned that incorporating the findings from the Race to the Top Professional Development Study into the Pre-K classrooms sounded labor intensive. Ms. Johnson was interested in knowing how DECAL would scale the coaching efforts to all Georgia's Pre-K classrooms. Susan Adams said that there will be monthly meetings with coaches and consultants who would then take the best of both professional development models (interaction they get with their peers and real life coaching) to provide the necessary supports to those who need it most.

8. **Board Self-Assessment Findings:** Bentley Ponder discussed the findings from the Board Self-Assessment. The overall results were positive. Dr. Ponder discussed the individual results (see slides). Mark Waits mentioned that he had recently attended the first meeting of the newly appointed DFCS board and that while there, DFCS Director Cagle (former DECAL commissioner) mentioned that he wants the DFCS board to be as engaged as the DECAL board.

6. Committee Meetings and Lunch

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

7. Committee Reports

Committees reported on their work.

- a. **Budget & Finance:** Carlene Talton reported for the Budget and Finance Committee.
- b. **Programs & Rules:** Jerri Kropp reported for the Programs and Rules Committee. Ms. Kropp discussed the desire to take the PBIS training statewide. The overall goal is to improve the social emotional and mental health of children. Kristi Lewis summarized what CCS is doing today with rule changes as they try to align the Georgia Code and the national best practices to improve and enhance the system. The committee discussed the complexity and the pros and cons of exemptions. Elisabetta Kasfir discussed her new role and new opportunities in CAPS.
- c. **System Reform:** Susan Harper reported for the System Reform Committee. The committee discussed the E3Zs. The emphasis was to target areas that have low level or lack of quality child care and to increase opportunities for these areas. Susan also discussed the multiple ways families can be involved (see handout). Susan stated that she was concerned that some coursework does not carry over from technical colleges to a four-year university. Kristen Bernhard said she would have an update about this transfer issue at the next board meeting.

8. Public Comment Period

No one signed up to make public comments.

9. Action on Proposed Rule Changes

Victor Morgan introduced proposed rule changes for board approval.

- 1. Kathy Howell motioned to approve changes to Rules Chapter 290-2-3-.03, 290-2-3-.07, 290-2-3-.15, 290-2-3-.15, and 290-2-3-.18. Phil Davis seconded. The board voted, and rule revisions were unanimously approved.
- 2. Luanne Purcell motioned to approve changes to Rules Chapter 591-1-1-.02, 591-1-1-.31, 591-1-1-.38, and to repeal Rules 591-1-1.41 through 591-1-1.44. Dawnn Henderson seconded. The board voted, and rule revisions were unanimously approved.

10. Adjournment

Victor Morgan reminded the board that their next meeting will take place August 18, 2016. The meeting was adjourned at 1:12 p.m.

Signature – Board Chair

Date

Signature – Board Secretary

Date