

Board of Early Care and Learning

Meeting Summary

February 16, 2017

Attendees

Board Members:

Victor Morgan, Kay Ford, Susan Harper, Phil Davis, Dawnn Henderson, Sheri Hooper, Jerri Kropp, Melissa Boekhaus,

Guests:

Hanah Goldberg, Joe Perreault, Lynn Manfredi/Petitt, Brian Lipton, Michelle Lank, Paige Pushkin, Melissa Johnson, Melvin Anderson, Cheryl Hearn Smith

Bright from the Start Staff:

Commissioner Amy Jacobs, Susan Adams, Kristin Bernhard, Jennie Couture, Craig Detweiler, Reg Griffin, Ray Higgins, Kristie Lewis, Ira Sudman, Allison Setterlind, Woody Dover, Falita Flowers, Jackie Shivers, Carol Hartman, Sharon McPherson, Bentley Ponder, Rian Ringsrud, Robin Stevens, Mark Waits, Bridget Walker, Jessie Bruno, Faith Duncan, Meghan McNail, Amy Page, William Cox, Danielle Williams, Kristen Huie, Titus Dyson

The first meeting of the Board of Early Care and Learning in 2017 opened with the approval of the day's agenda and the November 10, 2016 board meeting minutes. Inspiration was given by Board Chair Victor Morgan.

Members of the board provided updates on their activities:

- Board Chair Victor Morgan asked for a point of personal privilege to thank Mark Waits for his dedication and hard work as Board Liaison. He wished Mark a happy upcoming birthday.
- Melissa Boekhaus has had a first-hand look at licensed child care programs since researching preschool and kindergarten classes for her child. She is disappointed with the use of technology in the classrooms that she saw. She asked if DECAL has any oversight or regulations on the use of technology in the classroom. She noted that the American Academy of Pediatrics has developed guidelines on technology use by children.
- Phil Davis was encouraged to see a child care center van with a Quality Rated sign as he was driving in his community.
- Susan Harper attended a consultant training and was encouraged by the support. She shared her concern for her community which has been ravaged by storms this year that have destroyed many homes and displaced families, leaving children far away from their schools. She's curious about how often child care facilities practice their emergency plans.

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

- Commissioner Amy Jacobs gave an update on Governor Deal's proposed budget for fiscal year 2018. \$5.5 million is proposed for tiered reimbursements for Quality Rated child care programs, \$2 million is allocated for Early Language and Literacy Classroom Grants, and \$2.7 million to create the Georgia Center for Early Language and Literacy. The commissioner introduced the two Pre-K Teachers of the Year, Channie Frazier and Connie Ellington. The board chair presented Frazier and Ellington with board resolutions.
- Ray Higgins, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, gave a positive update on the budget and expenditure report. An update to the budget could include a 2% salary increase for teachers and assistants of Georgia Pre-K classrooms. The audit is almost finished, and the findings have been positive so far. The legislative session has been busy with at least four bills having been introduced that relate to DECAL.
- Robin Stevens, HR Director reviewed the organizational structure of the HR unit and shared employee demographics. She identified agency priorities for 2017, which include the CAPS transition and hiring of 150-180 new employees, employee development, policy updates, and ongoing compliance with FLSA regulations.
- Elisabetta Kasfir, Assistant Commissioner for Federal Programs, discussed the plan for the CAPS transition.
- Kristin Bernhard, Deputy Commissioner for System Reform, provided updated numbers for Quality Rated and reviewed the child care resource and referral (CCR&R) work in Georgia.
 - Cheryl Hearn Smith, Director of Parent Services for Quality Care for Children, presented on the work the statewide call center does and explained how it supports Quality Rated.
- Bentley Ponder, Research and Policy Analysis Director, and Susan Adams, Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K and Instructional Supports, provided a summary of the major findings from year two of Georgia's Pre-K Evaluation Longitudinal Study.

- Allison Setterlind, Head Start State Collaboration Director, presented an update on her current Head Start Collaboration Office projects.
- Kristie Lewis, Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services, explained the three primary proposed rule changes and the process of implementing the changes. There will be a public hearing and vote during the May board meeting, and if the board approves the rule changes, they will be implemented starting July 1st.
 - Amy Page and Randy Hudgins reviewed the Exemption Visits Project, including the purpose and goal, the timeline, exempt program requirements, the data, and next steps.

The Board broke for lunch and committee meetings. The Board reconvened at 12:55 p.m.

At 1 p.m. Board Chair Victor Morgan opened the meeting to public comments. Lynn Manfredi/Petitt, President of the Professional Child Care Alliance, explained her organization's support for HB 166, which will make family child care providers exempt from jury duty. She encouraged the board to call their representatives to express their opinions for the HB as they are able. The Board Chair recessed public comments.

Reg Griffin, Chief Communications Officer, gave the last DECAL presentation. Griffin went over the media coverage on DECAL projects from November to January. He encouraged the board to share DECAL news on their social media platforms as they are able.

Board committees gave their reports:

- Kay Ford reported for the Budget and Finance Committee. The committee discussed the budget presented by Deputy Commissioner Ray Higgins in more detail but said there was no additional information to be shared.
- Jerri Kropp reported for the Programs and Rules Committee. The committee heard additional details on the Pre-K Longitudinal Study from Susan Adams and Bentley Ponder. Falita Flowers also updated the committee on the nutrition programs.
- Susan Harper reported for the System Reform Committee. The committee heard additional details on Quality Rated, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, and E3Z projects.

The Board Chair reconvened the floor for any further public comments. With no further comments, the Board Chair closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

The next meeting of the Board of Early Care and Learning will take place May 11, 2017. Phil Davis motioned to adjourn. Kay Ford seconded. The Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 1:11pm.