

Board of Early Care and Learning
Meeting Summary
February 20, 2020

Attendees

- Board Members:** Kristy Beam, Jen Bennecke, Debra Brock, Phil Davis (Vice Chair), Susan Harper (Chair), Kathy Howell, Theresa Magpuri-Lavell, Kristin Morrissey, Luann Purcell
- Guests:** Charlotte Pelz, Brandi Swain, Caroline White, Heather Williams, Johnathon Hines, Katie Landes, Kayla Washington, Sheila Gooden, Jessica Woltjen
- Bright from the Start Staff:** Commissioner Amy Jacobs, Rian Ringsrud, Susan Adams, Pam Stevens, Bentley Ponder, Ira Sudman, Dennis Brice, Maria Goss, Michael Rodgers, Randy Hudgins, Reg Griffin, Shawnell Johnson, Donna Johnson, Carrie Ashbee, Laura Wagner, Denise Jenson, Maria Goss, Jennie Couture, Faith Duncan, Jackie Shivers, Ben Appling, Catherine Broussard, Margaret Stephens, Melvia Usury, Farouk Baksh, Jill O’Meara, Angela Melton, Meghan McNail, Bridget Ratajczak, Clayton Bassett, Woody Dover, Ann Panzica, Charles Robinson, Jessie Bruno, Quandra Collins, Demetrius Wilburn, Ebony Ford, Sonja Steptoe

The February 20, 2020, meeting of the Board of Early Care and Learning was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Susan Harper.

Ms. Harper asked for a motion to accept the day’s agenda. Mr. Davis moved to accept, and Ms. Beam seconded. The Board accepted the minutes unanimously.

Ms. Harper asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 21, 2019, Board meeting. Ms. Bennecke moved to approve, and Ms. Brock seconded. The Board approved the minutes unanimously.

Ms. Purcell provided the Inspiration about the importance of sharing leadership, building a sense of community, and providing mutual support.

The Board members provided updates on their recent activities.

DECAL leaders and staff provided updates on their work:

- Commissioner Amy Jacobs announced upcoming events including the Summer Food Service Program Summit on February 25, 2020; Children’s Day at the Capitol on March 17, 2020; and Literacy Day at the Capitol on March 20, 2020. She also updated the Board on progress made on the Quality Rated Language and Literacy Endorsement. She introduced Lead Research & Policy Analyst Jessie Bruno, who described the activities of the Census 2020 Complete Count Committee for Georgia and shared resources for awareness, outreach, and education in communities. She also showed videos recorded by Commissioner Jacobs and the Pre-K Teachers of the Year encouraging people to complete the 2020 Census. The Commissioner also introduced the Pre-K Teachers of the Year, Johnathon Hines and Heather Williams, who described their experiences and activities.
- Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration Rian Ringsrud provided an update on the agency’s state fiscal year (SFY) 2020 budget activity during the second quarter and reported that spending and funding are on track. He said the mandated budget reductions in state-funded programs will be larger than DECAL proposed but they will impact only CCS and Pre-K. He updated the status of three bills before the legislature affecting the agency. He also announced that the financial audit conducted by the state is finished and there were no findings of deficiencies.
- Chief Information Officer Dennis Brice provided details of ongoing upgrades that will comply with state CyberBoard Recommendations, simplify and secure DECAL’s IT services; bring innovation and new solutions; and improve quality.

Ms. Harper recessed the meeting at 10:31 a.m. and resumed it at 10:45 a.m.

- Deputy Commissioner for Pre-K and Instructional Supports Susan Adams announced that Georgia was one of 26 states that received the PDG Renewal Grant and will receive \$11.2 million over three years, to be used to strengthen the state's early childhood care and education system with a focus on vulnerable and underserved populations. She also reported on the Family Peer Ambassador Program that trains parents to be peer leaders and advocates.
- Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships Bentley Ponder updated the Board on progress toward meeting the goal of having all CAPS providers Quality Rated (QR) by December 31, 2020 (CAPS/QR 2020 Goal), including related changes to QR operational procedures and family support and communications activities. He reported that 45% of eligible providers are QR and 70% of children receiving CAPS or QR Subsidy Grants are in QR care.
- Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services (CCS) Pam Stevens explained food service safety rules, supervision definitions, and annual license fee rules that CCS will seek Board permission to revise. If permission is granted, after the rules are rewritten, she will present them in May for public comment followed by Board discussion and final adoption vote in August. If approved, they will take effect in October.

Following the CCS presentation, Ms. Harper asked for a motion to authorize CCS to review and revise the rules as outlined. Ms. Purcell moved to authorize and Ms. Morrissey seconded it. The Board voted unanimously to authorize CCS to revise the rules.

Ms. Harper adjourned the meeting for lunch and committee meetings at 11:50 a.m., and called the meeting back to order at 1 p.m.

When the meeting resumed, Ms. Harper opened the Public Comment period and invited speakers to sign-in. No one came forward.

The Committee Chairs then delivered their reports.

- Ms. Howell reported that the Program and Rules Committee received updates from CCS on a new provider technical assistance services, as well as the opening of the Pre-K application and curriculum review processes.
- Ms. Purcell said the Finance Committee took a deeper dive into the second quarter budget report. The group commended DECAL on keeping operating expenses in the 9%–10% range and for never having findings of deficiencies during financial audits.
- Mr. Davis reported that the Quality Innovations and Partnerships Committee received general updates on the community outreach and partnerships efforts, QR, Research and Early Head Start Community Partnership activities, including more details on the CAPS/QR 2020 Goal progress, the pilot phase of the Language and Literacy Endorsement Pilot, and a pilot to increase the efficiency of the QR observations conducted at family child care learning homes.

Following the committee reports, Ms. Harper asked for additional comments. When no one offered any she closed the Public Comment Period.

She announced that the next Board meeting will be held on May 21, 2020.

Ms. Harper adjourned the meeting at 1:23 p.m.