

DECAL - Bright from the Start**Meeting Minutes**

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**Board of Early Care and Learning Meeting
11/21/2013 9:00:00 AM**Twin Tower - East Tower, 8th Floor, Oak Room
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. SE, Atlanta, GA
30334

Bobby D. Cagle, Commissioner

No Attendees

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

- a. *Approve agenda for 11/21/13 meeting

Kay Ford moved to accept the day's agenda. Luann Purcell seconded. The agenda was unanimously accepted.

- b. *Approve minutes from 8/15/13 board meeting

Dawnn Henderson moved to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2013, meeting of the board. Kathy Howell seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Board Inspiration

Kay Ford delivered an inspirational poem in recognition of the Thanksgiving holiday.

4. Board Member Updates

Members of the board provided updates on their activities.

- Kay Ford, Luann Purcell, and Janice Gallimore reported attending Commissioner's chats with field staff in their respective districts. They praised the Commissioner's commitment to listen and receive honest feedback.
- Sherron Murphy reported participating in Georgia's Pre-K Week with local child care centers; working with students at the Georgia Association for Young Children (GAYC) annual conference; and attending the GAYC awards banquet.
- Judy Neal reported visiting a child care center and learning of their plans to apply to Quality Rated. She also has worked with the department to arrange for the Commissioner to speak in her community.
- Jerri Kropp reported attending the GAYC conference and awards banquet. She also showed a slide with pictures of all the DECAL employees who had been students of hers at Georgia Southern University.
- Susan Harper reported visiting Lee County Pre-K during Georgia's Pre-K Week, where a state legislator read a book to students. She also reported attending an infant toddler training session in her area and commented what excellent

training it was. She reported advocating for restoring Pre-K funding at a public forum in Albany where government representatives were receiving feedback.

- Phil Davis reported on having met Tripp Halstead and his family; Tripp is the child who had been injured at child care when a tree limb fell on him. Phil expressed how meeting Tripp and his family made him realize the need to support the families of and child care providers for medically fragile children.
- Dawnn Henderson reported advising parents to look for licensed and Quality Rated child care when considering holiday camps for their children.
- Victor Morgan reported discussing child development standards with both a child care teacher and a child development professor.
- Luann Purcell reported visiting a classroom with a state senator during Georgia's Pre-K Week. She also reported attending a recent forum on the common core curriculum where Pre-K alignment was discussed at a Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education meeting.

5. Bright from the Start Presentations

a. Commissioner's Update

Commissioner Bobby Cagle presented updates on his activities. (See slides.) He reported on his meetings with community leaders and visits to child care centers, particularly Quality Rated programs. He reported on his visits across the state to engage department field staff in *Chats with the Commissioner*, stating board members participating in these have offered helpful input to staff and that he received consistent feedback on the importance of promptly filling vacancies in the field so health and safety visits can be made. A report on the feedback received and the Commissioner's response will be presented in February. Board members are invited to attend remaining chats.

b. Finance and Nutrition Update

Ray Higgins presented updates on the department's finances, nutrition programs, and legislation pertaining to the department. (See slides.) He thanked Robin Stevens and Dee Bolden for coordinating the *Chats with the Commissioner*. He reported the hiring of Dee Bolden as Director of CCS Program Operations and Liz Young as Director of Public Relations and Special Projects. He reviewed fiscal year 2014 expenditures and remaining balances. He reported state revenues are up 5.9% and are on target to meet the fiscal year budget requirements; as a result, the department has not been required to identify budget reductions this year as it has in the past. He reported the number of sponsors, sites, counties, and meals served in the Summer Food Service Program in 2013 and stated the department is pursuing alternative avenues for providing food services in counties that have not historically participated in the program; a non-profit entity has offered funding for this initiative.

Mr. Higgins presented updates on state audits. The agency's finances are on track for another clean audit. Concerns raised in the IT audit are on track to be addressed.

c. Programs Update

Keith Bostick presented updates on using data to drive program synergy. (See slides.) He reported visiting child care programs throughout the state with the Commissioner. Susan Harper inquired about how the department addresses infants turning over on their own in cribs; Mr. Bostick responded that as long as they are placed on their backs, infants should be allowed to assume the sleeping position natural to them. Mr. Bostick presented a map of the distribution of licensed facilities statewide. Over the last year and a half the number of licensed programs has decreased. The department continues to investigate a number of unlicensed facilities.

Mr. Bostick also presented maps showing Quality Rated participation among licensed facilities. Ms. Ford inquired about financial incentives to participate in Quality Rated; Laura Johns detailed the kinds of incentives available, including technical assistance, materials, staff bonuses, and tiered reimbursement. Luann Purcell noted that some counties have a number of programs working on becoming Quality Rated although they have not yet received a star rating; she inquired if there is a way to indicate this on the website when parents search for Quality Rated. Laura Johns responded the department is currently looking into options to recognize programs participating in this way. Susan Harper inquired how Pre-K can also be Quality Rated; Susan Adams responded any Pre-K classrooms located in Quality Rated child care centers are also Quality Rated; the department is developing a pilot to look at what Quality Rated would look like in public school Pre-K programs. Laura Johns added that a Pre-K classroom in facilities going through the rating process will receive a classroom observation that goes toward determining the star level. Mr. Bostick also addressed some of the negative comments that appear in blog posts and other venues regarding Quality Rated.

d. Child Care Services Update

Kristie Lewis presented updates on Child Care Services (CCS). (See slides.) She presented the schedule for collecting 2014 license fees. The department opened payment collection on November 1 in compliance with Georgia law, and 35% of programs have paid their fee to date. The department has also been verifying the lawful presence of child care providers in compliance with the revised Georgia law.

Ms. Lewis presented proposed changes to align the rules governing criminal records checks with Georgia law. She also presented an overview of the 2013 summer pilot program to visit exempt programs with active CAPS certificates. Visits utilized the health and safety checklist that the department uses for unlicensed programs. Findings will be presented in February.

e. Quality Initiatives Update (Begin)

Carol Hartman presented updates on Quality Initiatives. (See slides.) She provided an overview of the department's support for inclusion. Efforts include the Inclusion Coordinator Network that offers training and technical assistance based on the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards; the Georgia Quest for Quality Inclusion leadership team that addresses collaborating services across agencies and providers; and the Red Flags for Autism Project, in collaboration with the Marcus Autism Center, that focuses on early detection and intervention in child care settings. The department has also hired a family engagement specialist to coordinate aligning with Strengthening Families

Georgia and Georgia Department of Education Title I programs and implementing a plan for technical assistance.

f. Break

g. Quality Initiatives Update (Continued)

Dr. Laura Johns presented updates on Quality Rated. She gave an overview of the Quality Rated Leadership Conference, held November 5-6 for Quality Rated three-star providers. The conference celebrated these providers and discussed mentoring the rest of the early care and education field in increasing quality. It also discussed the importance of program leadership for developing great teachers.

h. Pre-K Update

Susan Adams presented updates on Georgia's Pre-K Program. (See slides.) She reported on Georgia's Pre-K Week activities, celebrated annually in partnership with Voices for Georgia's Children. This year, 202 government and community leaders visited Pre-K programs, including 83 state representatives and 30 state senators. Over the last three years, 72% of the current General Assembly have visited a Pre-K classroom.

Ms. Adams gave an overview of Pre-K professional development activities for program directors, principals, lead teachers, and assistant teachers. Training this year focused on the newly developed Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). She reported the next step in the GELDS rollout is a review of curricula approved for Georgia's Pre-K programs or recommended for birth to five programs.

i. Head Start Update

Janice Haker presented updates on Head Start and the Head Start State Collaboration Office. (See slides.) She reported Head Start has in the last year changed how it funds grantees to eliminate poor-performing programs. The federal shutdown impacted one grantee in Georgia, while 16 programs could have their funding affected in the coming year. She presented on the effects of federal sequestration, flu immunizations, and home visitations. She reported all Head Start grantees have signed data sharing agreements with the department to participate in the Unified Data System.

j. Media Activity Update

Reg Griffin presented updates on media activity related to the agency. (See slides.) He reported on media placements from August through November. Of 87 placements, 71 were positive, and only one story was negative in tone. Top stories included Georgia's Pre-K Week, Quality Rated, Commissioner's visits, the autism partnership with the Marcus Institute, and the Head Start shutdown. He presented on the agency's social media activities through Facebook and Twitter. He showed video segments from NBC 26 (Augusta) on the Georgia

Regents University child care center becoming Quality Rated and from WSB Channel 2 on the department revoking child care licenses for safety violations.

6. Lunch & Committee Meetings

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. Public Hearing, 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

At 1 p.m. a public rules making hearing was held before the board. Public hearing officer Deborah Golymbieski called the hearing to order, explained the public hearing process, and opened the hearing for public comments. A summary of comments follows.

1. Paul Walker, NAEYC-accredited child care center owner, Acworth, Ga., commented the state's action allowing current child care staff three years to complete a national, fingerprint-based criminal background check is kicking the can down the road on the protection of children. He stated the local background checks are not comprehensive enough. He compared the delay to how it took 10 years to raise teacher qualifications. He referred to a center in Acworth where a child was molested.
2. Carolyn Salvador, Georgia Child Care Association, commented the association is in full support of the proposed rule as written. She stated a rollout stage is important to give providers time to become aware of required changes as well as allow the fingerprint check systems time to build capacity.

The public rules making hearing was closed at 1:30 p.m.

8. Board Action on Rule Changes

The Commissioner thanked the members of the public who took the time to attend and offer their comments. He stated the currently proposed rules adjust agency policies to comply with legislation previously enacted by the state legislature. New child care employees will have a national fingerprint check beginning in 2014, while existing employees have a three-year period in which to comply. He stated there are practical implications to immediate implementation of the law, including overwhelming background check staff. However, the department anticipates that most child care program staff will complete the checks sooner than required.

- i. Phil Davis motioned to approve rule chapter changes related to Family Day Care Homes. Susan Harper seconded. The board voted, and rule revisions were unanimously approved.
- ii. Kay Ford motioned to approve rule chapter changes related to Group Day Care Homes. Sherron Murphy seconded. The board voted, and rule revisions were unanimously approved.
- iii. Kathy Howell motioned to approve rule chapter changes related to Child Care Learning Centers. Jerri Kropp seconded. The board voted, and rule revisions were unanimously approved.

9. Committee Reports

a. Budget & Finance

Carlene Talton reported for the Budget and Finance Committee. The committee reviewed the fiscal year 2014 budget. Financially the department is on target. Luann Purcell commented the license fee collection is a burden to department staff and resources, and the fees collected go to the state budget and not to the department.

b. Programs & Rules Committee

Sherron Murphy reported for the Programs Committee. The committee discussed criminal record checks and current year Pre-K enrollment.

c. Ethics

Susan Harper reported for the Ethics Committee. Board members were previously requested to review recommended changes to Sections III and IV of the board bylaws, in which revised verbiage has been proposed to ensure board bylaws are in line with state requirements.

- i. The committee recommended the board adopt the proposed bylaw changes. The board voted, and bylaw changes were unanimously approved.

Ms. Harper reported the committee discussed additional recommendations and changes in Sections V through VIII of the board bylaws for the board to consider for approval at the February board meeting. Recommendations consist of removing possible inconsistencies with state requirements. One change is that new board members would receive training under the direction of the board liaison rather than from existing board members. Upon completion of the bylaws review, the Ethics Committee will disband as a standing committee and meet as an ad hoc committee as needed and as called on by the board chair.

Victor Morgan proposed to move the May 2014 board meeting from the 15th to the 22nd and to move the November 2014 board meeting from the 20th to the 13th. Phil Davis motioned to adopt the proposed meeting dates. Janice Gallimore seconded. The board voted, and the proposed 2014 meeting dates were unanimously approved.

10. Adjournment

The next meeting of the board will take place February 20, 2014. Chair Victor Morgan adjourned the meeting at 1:38 p.m.

Board Chair

Board Secretary