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## **Board of Early Care and Learning**

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### **Board of Early Care and Learning Meeting**

Thursday, November 12, 2015, 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 Jacobs, Commissioner

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## **Meeting Minutes**

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### Board Members

Victor Morgan, Board Chair  
Susan Harper, Board Vice Chair  
Kay Ford, Board Secretary  
Janice Gallimore  
Dawn Henderson  
Kathy Howell

Tangela Johnson  
Jerri Kropp  
Sherron Murphy  
Judy Neal  
Carlene Talton

### Public Guests

Lisa Belliston  
Shayla Elliott  
Lynn Manfredi/Petitt  
Bill Marlis  
Emily Pelton  
Joe Perreault

Angelique Thomas  
William Willoughby, Governor's Office of Planning and  
Budget  
Jessica Woltjen  
Karen Wylie

### Bright from the Start Staff

Amy Jacobs, Commissioner  
Susan Adams, Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K and  
Instructional Support  
Kristin Bernhard, Deputy Commissioner for System  
Reform  
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  
Ira Sudman, Chief Legal Officer  
Brian Collin, Research and Policy Analyst  
Woody Dover, Budget Administrator  
Falita Flowers, Nutrition Services Director

Janice Haker, Head Start State Collaboration Director  
Carol Hartman, Policy and System Reform Director  
Sharon McPherson, Accounting Manager  
Rob O'Callaghan, Research and Evaluation Specialist  
Lisa Rambhajan, Information Technology Assistant  
Rian Ringsrud, Audits and Compliance Director  
Pam Stevens, Quality Rated Director  
Robin Stevens, Human Resources Director  
Laura Wagner, Early Education Empowerment Zone  
Director  
Mark Waits, Special Assistant to the Commissioner  
Bridgett Walker, Early Head Start – Child Care  
Partnership Coordinator  
Liz Young, Government Relations and Special Projects  
Director

### **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

Kathy Howell moved to accept the day's agenda. Kay Ford seconded. The agenda was unanimously accepted. Kay Ford moved to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2015, meeting of the board. Carlene Talton seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

## 3. Inspiration

For inspiration, Judy Neal shared a poem about the value of a child's love. She recalled reading to her firstborn child and how that made him the person he is today.

## 4. Board Member Updates

Members of the board provided updates on their activities.

- Susan Harper reported visiting several sites in south Georgia during Pre-K Week and attending the Economic Impact Forums and Employee 2020 Roundtables in Macon and Atlanta.
- Kathy Howell recognized Mark Waits and Meghan McNail for setting up her visit to read in Pre-K classrooms in Carrollton. She reported attending the Economic Impact Forum and Employee Roundtable in Macon.
- Dawnn Henderson reported attending the Economic Impact forum and noted the importance of everyone getting involved to help.
- Sherron Murphy reported using Pre-K week to have a *read-a-thon* with students in their lab school. Reported that Commissioner Jacobs attending technical college consortium and presenting GELDS toolbox.
- Janice Gallimore reported attending the Economic Impact Forum and Employee Roundtable in Atlanta. Expressed that she believes the state and department are moving in the right direction.
- Jerri Kropp reported First Lady Sandra Deal visited the Georgia Southern University preschool.
- Judy Neal reported attending the Economic Impact Forum and Employee Roundtable in Atlanta.
- Tangela Johnson reported attending a meeting for female leaders in the community in connection with the E3Z in northwest Georgia.

## 5. Bright from the Start Presentations

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

- a. Communications Update:** Reg Griffin presented updates on department communications. (See slides.) He reported outreach during Georgia's Pre-K Week, including visits to Pre-K sites with Governor Nathan Deal, First Lady Sandra Deal, and Pete the Cat. He reported on employee roundtable meetings in Macon and Atlanta in October. A video recorded by Governor Deal for department staff was shown. A video featuring Child Care Services consultant Rukiya Thomas and Georgia's Pre-K coordinator Meghan McNail on "A Day in the Life" of department field staff recorded for the staff meetings was also shown.

Mr. Griffin reported on media placements related to the department in the news. Commonly covered items included Georgia's Pre-K Week, the Governor's Education Reform Commission, and Nutrition Services meals. He pointed out the Commissioner's op-ed piece published in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. He presented statistics on the agency's presence in social media and pointed out the growth since starting on Facebook and Twitter in 2012.

- b. Child Care Services Update:** Kristie Lewis presented updates on Child Care Services (CCS). (See slides.) She presented an overview of the state's approach to completing a new state plan for the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to meet the requirements of its 2014 reauthorization. The state is partnering with BUILD to strategize its response and planning stakeholder outreach, including public hearings in January 2016. The federal deadline for the plan is March 1, 2016. The target date for submission is February 26, 2016, with implementation to begin on June 1, 2016. The department will seek rule changes to meet some of the new CCDF

requirements related to health and safety, including preservice and orientation training and emergency preparedness, and plans to provide free, online training and resources related to enforcement and compliance. In addition, the board will vote today on rules the agency has drafted in response to state legislation. Ms. Lewis asked the board to authorize the department to move forward on drafting new rules or modifying existing rules to comply with new CCDF requirements.

- i. Victor Morgan asked for a motion to authorize the department to begin drafting rule changes. Susan Harper made a motion. Kay Ford seconded. Ms. Ford asked how the rule changes would affect new employees. Ms. Lewis responded new employees would have three months to meet the training requirement. The board voted, and authorization to proceed drafting rules was unanimously granted.
- c. **System Reform Update:** Kristin Bernhard presented updates on System Reform. (See slides.) She updated the board on participation and ratings in Quality Rated and noted that 21 percent of licensed child care capacity in Georgia is now in a rated program. She presented an overview of Quality Rated's transition to a new preschool classroom observation tool, from the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) to the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Third Edition (ECERS-3). The new tool includes an increased emphasis on developmentally appropriate pre-academic skills in language and literacy and math and individualized teaching and learning. From September through December 2015, providers seeking to be rated will have a choice between ECERS-R and ECERS-3, with the full transition to ECERS-3 beginning January 1, 2016. Jerri Kropp commented how important it is that pre-academic skills are developmentally appropriate.
- d. **Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Update:** Carol Hartman presented updates on the state's Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) grant. (See slides.) Early Head Start is a federal program providing high quality child care to infants and toddlers in families with incomes at or below the federal poverty level. The eight EHS-CCP grants received by entities in Georgia add about 1,300 Early Head Start slots, increasing Early Head Start capacity in the state by 41 percent. She stated administering the grant provides a system-building opportunity for the department and is integrated with Quality Rated and child care subsidies. The state has contracted with five child care centers and 16 family child care homes to deliver Early Head Start services. Susan Harper inquired how teachers structure a day to ensure the domains in the ECERS-3 are observable within a limited time frame for the observation. Ms. Bernhard responded: if one domain is not observed, it will not be scored and added that high quality is not easy. Pam Stevens stated preschool classroom instruction should be structured such that within a three-hour period all of the domains are observable.
- e. **Head Start Update:** Janice Haker presented updates on Head Start. (See slides.) She reported Head Start has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Georgia Department of Education to serve more homeless families. The collaboration office is currently seeking to expand services for children in foster care through a partnership with DFCS. GaDOE, DPH, DECAL and Head Start will soon sign a memorandum of understanding on better serving children with disabilities. She reported on a research project to pilot a new tool related to toxic stress in childhood. Presented a career ladder for home visitors to aid in professionalizing the field. She also presented an executive summary on funded enrollment in Head Start and Early Head Start in Georgia. She noted funding for services to infants and toddlers remains well below the need nationally.
- f. **Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports Update:** Susan Adams presented updates on Georgia's Pre-K Program and on Instructional Supports. (See slides.) She reported on the Pre-K Longitudinal Study, a study that will explore short- and long-term impacts of Georgia's Pre-K for children through third grade. The study includes a random sample of children representative of the state. The child cohort is currently in Kindergarten, and the study will conclude in 2018. Findings from their year in Georgia's Pre-K were recently released and include assessments of children's skills and measures of classroom quality. From the beginning to the end of the year in Pre-K, children made significant gains on most measures at a greater rate than would be expected. The study also looked at growth in skills for Spanish-speaking children and found significant gains in all skills when measured in English, though they remain behind their peers. Some skills showed decreases when measured in Spanish. Classroom quality was generally in the medium to high range. Results show that quality is consistent across the state.

Ms. Adams presented on the Georgia Professional Development System, an online system being developed and released in several phases and will encompass the Professional Development Registry, training registration systems, and the trainer and training approval system. The first phase will be released in the winter of 2016. She reported the agency is also currently revising its workforce knowledge and competencies framework with a

kickoff in early 2016. She reported on the agency's partnership with WIDA to provide support for dual language learners in early care and education; training is being provided for a master cadre of professional development providers, and institutes for caregivers will be offered in 2016. She presented on visits during Georgia's Pre-K Week, including visits with congressmen, state legislators, the Governor and First Lady, heads of other state agencies, members of the Governor's staff, and local school board members. Ms. Harper inquired about the expense of training teachers to work with dual language learners. Ms. Adams responded that Pre-K is building capacity for dual language training using ELC funding. Mr. Morgan inquired how familiar public school administrators are with the CLASS. Ms. Adams responded the department has worked to correlate CLASS with Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) for greater understanding in public school settings.

- g. Finance and CAPS Update:** Ray Higgins presented updates on the department's finances and the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program. (See slides.) He presented current fiscal year expenditures. He also mentioned several internal changes within the CAPS program here at DECAL for better program alignment, working with DHS to improve customer service, CCDF reauthorization, the ongoing integrated eligibility project, and the future transition of eligibility workers to DECAL. Mr. Higgins also stated the funding restrictions would be lifted soon statewide. He also expressed caution stating that although the funding restrictions were being lifted, they may have to be imposed again due to enrollment, spending, or the impact of changes in the upcoming CCDF State Plan.
- h. Commissioner's Update:** Commissioner Amy Jacobs presented updates on her activities. (See slides.) She presented on the Early Childhood Subcommittee of the Governor's Education Reform Commission. Final recommendations of the subcommittee will be presented to the full commission on November 19. The Commissioner presented findings from the Economic Impact Study, including its total economic impact of \$4.7 billion annually, 337,000 children served annually, and more than half a million parents enabled to work. She reported on feedback received from the employee meetings held in Atlanta and Macon. She shared her personal vision for the department that every child in Georgia will have access to high quality early care and learning. She also shared her vision for department staff that every employee will recognize and appreciate how their job contributes to fulfilling the mission of the department. Ms. Ford requested the department provide talking points on the findings from the Economic Impact Study for board members to use in their community advocacy. Commissioner responded current priorities would mirror the subcommittee recommendations; talking points related to these will be provided.

## 6. Committee Meetings and Lunch

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

At 1 p.m. a public hearing on proposed new rules, rules to be repealed, and rule amendments was held before the board. Christie Bearden called the hearing to order, explained the public hearing process, and opened the hearing for public comments. Copies of comments submitted in writing were also provided to board members. A summary of comments follows.

1. Emily Pelton, Executive Director, Voices for Georgia's Children, acknowledged the department's support on Georgia's Pre-K Week and expressed appreciation to Governor Deal and First Lady Deal for endorsing and participating in the event. She reported the following statistics about visits to Pre-K sites: 46% of state legislators (senators and representatives) visited Pre-K sites; seven members of Georgia's congressional delegation; heads of other Georgia state agencies; 18 members of local school boards; and employee participation from Synovus and Georgia Power. In all, 549 Georgia's Pre-K programs participated.
2. Karen Wylie, owner and chief caregiver, North Georgia Prep (Ball Ground), commented there are 310 group homes in the state that teach almost 6,000 children. The removal of the group day care home designation will disqualify these providers from participating in the CACFP for children in need. Raising their current fees to cover the cost of nutritious food will drive more programs out of business and underground. Stipulation for food program approval should remain unchanged. Are also being asked to pay for group home license fee before end of December, and then will not exist. Quality Rated rating will also not exist. Name change makes local zoning

approval for a business license more difficult. Group home providers were not adequately informed of the impact of this change on their participation in the food program.

3. Angelique Thomas and Shayla Elliott, Quality Compliance, Bright Horizons, commented on the need for different rules for mega-centers such as theirs with over 20 classrooms. Because they are judged on same compliance rules as smaller centers, more classrooms and more children mean they are more likely to have rule citations and more likely to be found noncompliant. The recommended that DECAL have a separate set of rules for mega-centers.
4. Lynn Manfredi/Petitt, President, Professional Family Child Care Alliance, commented the change from family day care home to family child care home has been long sought by the industry and is appreciated.

## 8. Committee Reports

Committees reported on their work.

- a. **Budget & Finance:** Carlene Talton reported for the Budget and Finance Committee. The committee reviewed the current fiscal year expenditures and discussed potential changes in funding sources.
- b. **Programs & Rules:** Sherron Murphy reported for the Programs Committee. The committee discussed Inclusive School Week designated for December 7-11; board members will be provided a schedule of events.
- c. **System Reform:** Susan Harper reported for the System Reform Committee. The committee discussed the marketing and public awareness campaign made possible by private funds. The committee also discussed focus groups on attitudes toward early learning conducted by a marketing firm to inform Quality Rated marketing efforts. The committee discussed tax incentives that will be presented as Early Education Subcommittee recommendations and activities in the Early Education Empowerment Zones.

## 9. Action on Proposed Rule Changes

Sherron Murphy requested clarification on the impact of changing the group child care home designation on eligibility in the CACFP. Falita Flowers reported Nutrition Services staff reviewed CACFP eligibility rules for group child care. The rule change is not a direct impact on CACFP participation. Rather, not all group day care homes currently participating in CACFP meet the USDA requirements. Nutrition Services is taking the opportunity of the child care rule change to align its policy with USDA requirements.

Victor Morgan introduced proposed rule changes for board approval.

1. Dawnn Henderson motioned to repeal rules 290-2-1-.01 through 290-2-1-.21. Janice Gallimore seconded. The board voted, and repealing these rules was unanimously approved.
2. Kathy Howell motioned to approve changes to rules chapter 290-2-3-.02 through 290-2-3-.16 & 290-2-3-.18 through 290-2-3-.21. Kay Ford seconded. The board voted, and rule revisions were unanimously approved.
3. Tangela Johnson motioned to approve changes to rules chapter 591-1-1-.02 through 591-1-1-.23 & 591-1-1-.25 through 591-1-1-.38 & 591-1-1-.41 through 591-1-1-.44 & 591-1-1-. Janice Gallimore seconded. The board voted, and rule revisions were unanimously approved.
4. Kathy Howell motioned to approve changes to rules chapter 591-3-1-.01 through 591-3-1-. Carlene Talton seconded. The board voted, and rule revisions were unanimously approved.

## 10. Adjournment

The next meeting of the board will take place February 18, 2016. Kathy Howell motioned to adjourn. Dawnn Henderson seconded. The board unanimously agreed to adjourn. Victor Morgan adjourned the meeting at 2:02 p.m.

Board Chair

Board Secretary

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*Signature*

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*Date*

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