

Board of Early Care and Learning

Meeting Summary

February 15, 2018

Attendees

Board Members: Susan Harper, Jerri Kropp, Victor Morgan, Melissa Boekhaus, Phil Davis, Sheri Hooper, Kathy Howell, Dr. Luann Purcell, Tangel Johnson

Guests: *Caylor Johnson, Pam Runkle, Bibi Omar, Jodi McNamara, Kelly Fuqua, Nathan Leatherwood, Pam Tatum, Jorge Verlenden, Lynn Manfredi/Petit, Michelle Lank*

Bright from the Start Staff: Commissioner Amy Jacobs, Mark Waits, Elisabetta Kasfir, Craig Detweiler, Reg Griffin, Ray Higgins, Kristie Lewis, Ira Sudman, Kristin Bernhard, Susan Adams, Bentley Ponder, Pam Stevens, Falita Flowers, Carol Hartman, Sharon McPherson, Rian Ringsrud, Woody Dover, Allison Setterlind, Robin Stevens, Jennie Couture, Jackie Shivers, Nia King, Woody Dover, Rachael Lee, Mary Stoklas, Alexandria Williams, Jessie Bruno, Quandra Collins, William Cox, and Christi Moore

The February 15, 2018 meeting of the Board of Early Care and Learning opened with the approval of the day's agenda and the November 16, 2017 board meeting minutes. Inspiration was given by Jennie Couture.

Members of the board provided updates on their activities:

- Susan Harper and Jennie Couture read to a classroom at The Family Tree at the Phoebe Putney Health System.
- Melissa Boekhaus invited Commissioner Jacobs to speak to the Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Commissioner shared about the work that DECAL is doing.
- Kathy Howell had lunch with three of the original Georgia's Pre-K teachers.
- Dr. Luann Purcell read to a classroom at the school near her office. She brought cupcakes, and the class sang Happy Birthday to Georgia's Pre-K.

DECAL staff provided updates on their program areas:

- Commissioner Amy Jacobs recognized the events happening this week around Inclusive Early Learning Week. The Commissioner shared about reconvening DECAL's Advisory Committee to provide recommendations on serving the early care and education workforce. The group plans to meet again in April to discuss workforce challenges. The Commissioner invited the Board to Georgia's Pre-K Birthday Party on March 6th at 5 pm. The Commissioner announced the book that Governor and Mrs. Deal will present to each Pre-K student at the end of the year. This year's book will be *Behind the Little Red Door* by Coy Bowles. Teachers are being encouraged to participate in a contest to win a visit from Bowles, a native Georgian and member of the Zac Brown Band. This year's Georgia's Pre-K Teachers of the Year attended the meeting, and were introduced by Commissioner Jacobs. They each presented on what opportunities they've had since winning the honor and received official resolutions from the Board of Early Care and Learning.
- Ray Higgins, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, presented the budget report for the last quarter; the department is in good financial standing for the time period. Crossover day in the Georgia General Assembly is February 28th. The agency continues to track HB 494 that addresses federal changes to criminal records checks (CRC). HB 740 passed the House. This bill will require school systems to conduct certain screenings, assessments, and reviews before expelling young children. HB 740 was revised to more directly address the apparent needs of the child. SB 97 calls for changes in the CAPS program.
- Kristin Bernhard, Deputy Commissioner of System Reform, presented updates on Quality Rated. 62% of centers were participating at the end of 2017. Currently approximately 1,500 programs have earned a star rating, and 2,000 are working on becoming rated. Bernhard introduced Rachael Lee, DECAL Peer Support Network Specialist, who talked about the Peer Support Network. Michelle Smith Lank, owner of a three-star rated child care center and a Peer Support Ambassador, shared on the benefits of participating in the Peer Support Network.

- Craig Detweiler, Chief Information Officer, provided a demo of the newly updated DECAL KOALA system. This system enhances providers' self-service and allows them to input more detailed information about their programs.
- Elisabetta Kasfir, Assistant Commissioner for Federal Programs, provided updates on the CAPS transition project. The CAPS department has now fully moved into the 2nd and 5th floors of the Agriculture Building. Two hundred new staff members have been hired as part of this transition. DFCS continues to process the pending applications and case renewals that were submitted before the transition began.
- Kristie Lewis, Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services, presented changes made to the CCS regions going from five to six 6 regions to more accurately assign consultant workloads. This change will be effective on July 1, 2018. Lewis requested permission to revise the CCS rules to align with proposed legislation and the federal CCDF requirements around criminal records checks. Victor Morgan made the motion, which was seconded by Kathy Howell. The board vote to grant permission to draft proposed changes passed.
- Susan Adams, Assistant Commissioner of Pre-K and Instructional Supports Services, presented the deadlines for applications for Georgia's Pre-K Program and the Summer Transition Programs. Inclusive Early Learning Week, held the week of the board meeting, has focused on promoting inclusive practices at the classroom and state levels. Georgia's SEEDS is a state initiative that brings together state partners to support and align the state's initiatives related to increased social emotional development and decreased challenging behaviors in early childhood settings.

Before adjourning for lunch and committee meetings. Susan Harper announced that Kay Ford, board member representing the 1st Congressional District, has resigned from the board. Ms. Ford was board secretary, so her resignation meant the board needed to elect a new secretary. Ms. Harper asked board members to think about a replacement for Ms. Ford and said the board would conduct an election before adjourning the meeting.

During lunch board committees met. When the board reconvened, committee chairs gave their reports:

- The budget and finance committee reported that there were no major updates. The committee discussed SB 97 and the ongoing federal budgetary activity that may affect DECAL. A more detailed budget report was provided.
- Tangela Johnson reported for the program and rules committee that there are 35 centers at risk of having their licenses revoked because of unpaid fees. A CCS priority will be to examine the nationwide trend of a decline in home based care and what this means for Georgia. Elisabetta reported on the possible policy changes around CAPS. Falita Flowers reported on nutrition and a new approach to target YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs.
- Phil Davis reported further details on two Early Head Start Child Care Partnership initiatives: Georgia's SEEDS for Success Pyramid Model Implementation Project and Practice-based Coaching. The system reform committee also discussed further updates on Quality Rated during this time.

Susan Harper opened the public hearing portion of the meeting. No one had signed up to comment, so the public hearing was adjourned.

Ms. Harper then opened the meeting for electing a new board secretary. Phil Davis made a motion that Kathy Howell be nominated as board secretary. Luann Purcell seconded. The board voted unanimously to elect Ms. Howell as the new secretary.

Susan Harper reminded the board that the next meeting of the board will take place May 10, 2018.

Board Chair Susan Harper adjourned the meeting at 1:28 p.m.