

Board of Early Care and Learning
Meeting Summary
August 15, 2019

Attendees

- Board Members:** Susan Harper (Chair), Kristy Beam, Jen Bennecke, Debra Brock, Phil Davis (Vice Chair), Kathy Howell (Secretary), Drew Hunt, Theresa Magpuri-Lavell, Kristin Morrissey, Luann Purcell, Cristina Washell
- Guests:** Uzma Azhar, Miranda Williams, Neomi Fletcher, Lisa Garrison, Hanah Goldberg, Sheila Gooden, Charlotte Pelz, Joe Perrault, Kayla Washington,
- Bright from the Start Staff:** Commissioner Amy Jacobs, Rian Ringsrud, Elisabetta Kasfir, Susan Adams, Pam Stevens, Bentley Ponder, Ira Sudman, Dennis Brice, Arun Kandel, Christi Moore, Michael Rodgers, Randy Hudgins, Reg Griffin, Robin Stevens, Carrie Ashbee, Laura Wagner, Ben Appling, Faith Duncan, Jackie Shivers, Tamika Boone, Donna Johnson, Shawnell Johnson, Catherine Broussard, Clayton Bassett, Gregory Brown, Melvia Usury, Farouk Baksh, Taijha Harden, Barbara Sanders, Sonja Adams, Sonja Ladd, LariLyn Beyer, Nate Smith, Jill O'Meara, Laura Reid, Woody Dover, Mary Stoklas, Angela Melton, Jennifer Statham, Jennifer Bridgeman, Giovanna Lucas, Margrett Stephens, Quandra Collins, Lisa Rambhajan, Demetrius Wilburn, David Mahone, Sonja Steptoe

The August 15, 2019, meeting of the Board of Early Care and Learning was called to order at 9 a.m. by Board Chair Susan Harper.

Ms. Harper asked for a motion to accept the day's agenda. Ms. Purcell 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 May 16, 2019, Board meeting. Mr. Davis moved to approve, and Ms. Howell seconded. The Board approved the minutes unanimously.

Ms. Purcell provided the Inspiration, which consisted of issuing rocks to each Board Member and asking them to write positive messages and images on them. The rocks will be delivered to child care centers to inspire students and spread the joy of learning to them.

Because this was the first meeting for the seven new Board members, all members introduced themselves and several provided updates on their recent activities.

DECAL leaders and staff provided updates on their work:

- Commissioner Amy Jacobs updated the Board on the timeline for selecting the Pre-K Teacher of the Year now that the finalists have been named. At the May 16 meeting she had announced that Kaela Tustin, Beth Adcock, and Jonathan Hines are the public school Pre-K Teacher of the Year finalists and Teresa Dixon, Kaysha Smith, and Heather Williams are the finalists in the private center category, with the winners to be announced in September. The Commissioner also updated the Board on the progress DECAL is making on implementing Governor Brian Kemp's Language & Literacy Endorsement initiative. She announced that DECAL will hold an all-staff meeting on October 1, 2019 at the Georgia International Convention Center.
- Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration Rian Ringsrud provided an update on the culmination of the agency's state fiscal year (SFY) 2019 budget and expenditures, which closed on June 30, 2019. He also briefed the Board on DECAL's 2021 budget request.
- Deputy Commissioner for Federal Programs Elisabetta Kasfir provided an update on increases to Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) reimbursement rates and reductions to the income threshold for families. She also introduced Donna Johnson and Shawnell Johnson, directors of CAPS Family Support, who provided details on the CAPS Two-Generation projects that provide participating parents with higher education and economic supports and their children with high-quality education and health care access and coverage.

- Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations & Partnerships Bentley Ponder updated the Board on progress made in evaluating and adding providers to the program since it began in 2012. He also announced that DECAL has hired a new director of the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Program (EHS – CCP) who will start work on August 16, 2019. Ponder also reported on the background, culmination, and lessons learned related to the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant.

Ms. Harper recessed the meeting at 10:23 a.m. and resumed it at 10:33 a.m.

- Deputy Commissioner for Pre-K and Instructional Supports Susan Adams reported on the Pre-K Summer Transition Program and preparations for the 2019 Georgia’s Pre-K Week, which will be commemorated October 7–11, 2019. She also updated the Board on the ongoing work funded by the Lifting Infants and Toddlers Through Language-Rich Environments (LITTLE) grants DECAL received. Ms. Adams and Mr. Ponder revealed the latest results from the ongoing longitudinal study of students who attended Georgia’s Pre-K Program. The findings covered the academic skill growth rates for students through the second grade.
- Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services (CCS) Pam Stevens discussed the proposed changes to licensing rules for child care learning centers (CCLCs) in Rule Chapter 591-1-1.09(1)(f) – .33(5), Rule Chapter 290-2-3.03(y) – .07(18), and family child care learning homes (FCCLHs) covering Rule Chapter 290-2-3-.07(4) – .07(21) that the Board will vote on during the meeting’s afternoon session.

Ms. Harper adjourned the meeting for lunch and committee meetings at 11:50 a.m., and called the meeting back to order at 1:00 p.m.

When the meeting reconvened, Ms. Harper turned the meeting over to DECAL Public Hearing Officer Greg Brown, who explained the process for voting on the licensing rule changes and then opened the Public Rulemaking Hearing on the proposed changes. He announced that one written comment was received. Mr. Brown closed the hearing when no one came forward to offer additional comments.

The Board meeting resumed with committee chairs delivering their reports.

- Ms. Howell reported that the Programs Committee heard from the Nutrition Services Division about the Summer Food Service Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and from the Pre-K Program about a Preschool Development Grant DECAL has received. Members also received updates on the CAPS Program, the work the CCS Division is doing around playground safety, the school-age summer project, and the expansion of the inclusion and behavioral supports offered by the Instructional Supports Division.
- Mr. Davis reported that the Quality Innovations and Partnerships Committee received general updates and overviews of the EHS – CCP, the Research Team’s grant work and other projects, Community Outreach and Partnerships efforts, and Quality Rated initiatives to help eligible providers meet the December 2020 deadline for earning a star rating.
- Ms. Purcell reported that the Finance Committee received a summary, a report on the current status, and expenditure details of the SFY 2020 budget.

Following the committee reports, the Board voted on the proposed licensing rule changes. All of the changes were approved by unanimous votes.

The Board then unanimously approved the meeting dates for 2020: February 20; May 21; August 27; and November 19.

Ms. Harper announced that the next Board meeting will be held on November 21, 2019.

She adjourned the meeting at 1:35 p.m.