

Board of Early Care and Learning
Meeting Summary
May 14, 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, Cristina Washell

DECAL Staff:

Commissioner Amy Jacobs, Rian Ringsrud, Elisabetta Kasfir, Pam Stevens, Susan Adams, Bentley Ponder, Ira Sudman, Dennis Brice, Reg Griffin, Tiffany Allen, Shantreze Anderson, Ben Appling, Carrie Ashbee, Pamela Barner, Richard Bartlett, Chastity Baugh, Larilyn Beyer, Tamika Boone, Karen Brown, Vanessa Brown, Jessie Bruno, Jennifer Collins, Quandra Collins, Jennie Couture, Katie Davis, Haley Dopson, Woody Dover, Faith Duncan, Maria Goss, Taijha Harden, Anita Hasni, Leigh Ann Hendrix, Melissa Herndon, Amy Hill, Randy Hudgins, Alexis-Breanna Jefferson, Denise Jenson, Donna Johnson, Shawnell Johnson, Arun Kandel, Sonia Ladd, Marcy Maioli, Susan Maude, Doris McQuiller, Angela Melton, Reisha Merriman, Ellaine Miller, Lindsay Miller, Christi Moore, Dana Morrison, Rob O'Callaghan, Jill O'Meara, Crystal Munoz, Rhonda Parker, Martine Powe, Laura Reid, Anne Rein, Alphonso Rembert, Michael Rodgers, April Rogers, Brittany Sams, Barbara Sanders, Tamisa Sapp, Allison Setterlind, Jackie Shivers, Marcie Singletary, Carrie Spangler, Sonja Steptoe, Robin Stevens, Tanisha Stewart, Cynthia Strong-McCarthy, Kristy Turner, Melvia Usury, Keturah Wafer, Laura Wagner, Bridgett Walker, Chrische' Walker, Jennifer Waters, Demetrius Wilburn, Liz Young,

Other Guests:

Kathy Alexander, Rebecca Anderson, Roma Anderson, Donna Aranson, Uzma Azhar, Kim Barnett, Ashleigh Bailey, Edna Barrera, Ann Barry, Tracy Baynes, Lisa Belliston, Mindy Binderman, Amanda Blakely, Angela Brown, Tim Cairl, Gloria Calhoun, LaTonia Camp, Virda Catalano, Abbie Chaddick, Alethea, Cicero-Brown, Andrea Cline, Melissa Cole, Carolyn Colon, Gina Cook, Rebecca Cowan, Moakina Cunningham, Molly DeBorde, Craig Detweiler, Yasmeen Diggs, Jacqueline Dougherty, Priscilla Drain, Dana Driggers, Kaitlyn Duttry, Diane Early, David Fleming, Natalie Feagin, Rochelle Forbes, Cindy Foster, Sharon Foster, Jessica Gaines, Kathy Garrett, Bonita Gary, Aleta Gass, Tamara Glass, Hannah Goldberg, Debra Graham, Kristen Groover, Kathy Hagen, Alana, Hardison, Diane Heilmann, Japera Hemming, Gwennet Henry, Beverly Johnson, Donna Johnson, Hows King, Michelle Lank, L. Regina Little, Kate Locke, Mary Lyons, Deziree Mattocks, Polly McKinney, Cindy McNeil, CheeChristine Merritt, Bryan Miller, Terenia Moody, Michele Mullins, Trent Nichelson, George Nixon, Cheryl Odom, Brandon Ogden, Wande Okunoren-Meadows, Nadia Orfali Hall, Harry Patel, Attallah Pamoja, Joe Perreault, Julie Phillips, Celeste Phoenix, Martine Powe, Jaime Rechkemmer, Maggie Reeves, Kim Reid, Ellen Reynolds, Inge Robb, Ann Rosenthal, Pam Runkle, Enchante Sanders, Joy Sanders, Kevin Schnell, Sarah Shinsky, Kelcie Silvio, Talia Simon, Christopher Smith, Amy Southers, Cindy Spann, Joanne Stokowski, Edye Summerfield Disner, Pam Tatum, Tanisha Terry, Angelique Thomas, Christina Thompson, Doreen Tingle,

Chermaine Tolbert, Caitlin Vadini, Jane Vlahos, Mark Waits, Cera Wallace,
Kayla Washington, Callan Wells, Laura White, Hannah Williams, Jessica Woltjen

The May 14, 2020, meeting of the Board of Early Care and Learning was held online via GoToWebinar.

At 9:12 a.m. Ms. Harper called the meeting to order and explained that the agenda would be condensed and limited to updates on the Department's response to the COVID-19 crisis and its plans for complying with the Governor's mandated budget reductions.

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

Ms. Harper asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2020, Board meeting. Ms. Bennecke moved to approve, and Mr. Davis seconded. The Board approved the minutes unanimously.

DECAL leaders provided updates on the Department's response to the public health emergency:

- Commissioner Amy Jacobs reviewed the timeline of Governor Kemp's executive orders related to COVID-19 and described four strategies she and the Executive Team developed to respond to the public health emergency. These are communication; policy revisions for Child Care Services (CCS), the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) Program, and Georgia's Pre-K; at home resources for parents; and data capture and sharing. She noted that DECAL has hosted four webinars for providers, and more than 1,000 providers have tuned in. The agency also hosts a weekly call for stakeholders, updates the DECAL website and social media daily, maintains a webpage of FAQs, and airs a weekly podcast, DECAL Download. The agency's executive team receives a daily data report that includes a map of temporary closures and tables showing the numbers of child care applications received, calls to the 1-877-ALL-GA-KIDS helpline, comprehensive background checks, CAPS workload, and sponsors operating emergency feeding sites.

The Commissioner also outlined DECAL's strategy for and progress in dispersing \$144 million received from the CARES Act. As of May 13, 2020, 3,300 providers (75% of the state's licensed entities) had applied for \$34 million in one-time Short Term Assistance Benefit for Licensed Entities (STABLE) grants. The deadline for applications is May 15.

- Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration Rian Ringsrud gave an update on Nutrition Services and DECAL's emergency feeding program. Currently, 40 sponsors are operating over 400 sites in 51 counties. As of May 12, sponsors have served over 1.2 million meals. The agency is authorized to operate the program through June 30.
- Deputy Commissioner for Federal Programs Elisabetta Kasfir described the emergency payment policies that have been implemented for the CAPS Program to support providers in remaining open and the eligibility requirements that have been relaxed to allow families access. CAPS also created a new priority group as required by the CARES act to help pay for child care for the essential workforce. Of the 500 slots created for the new priority group, more than 400 are still available.
- Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services (CCS) Pam Stevens reported on the policy changes her division implemented to allow providers to open and families to have access while following stricter public health guidelines. The division also created a checklist to help providers comply with changes and continues to provide virtual check-ins with consultants. As of May 14, 2,082 programs were open, about 45% of the total.
- Deputy Commissioner for Pre-K and Instructional Supports Susan Adams reported that all Pre-K programs closed on April 6 for the remainder of the school year. DECAL continues to pay Pre-K

programs as scheduled. The division has also developed curricular materials that are available online and in print, including Pre-K@home, Toddler Time, and Chat About Children.

- Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships Bentley Ponder reported that Quality Rated has suspended field observations until at least June 30, 2020, extended the deadline for CAPS providers to become Quality Rated until at least July 1, 2021, and allowed providers who were scheduled to be re-rated in 2020 to extend until 2021. The Outreach and Partnerships team created business support webinars in which more than 1,000 providers participated, and the community coordinators created community engagement networks following the model of Head Start. In its role as an Early Head Start grantee, the division submitted a non-competitive grant continuation application on April 1 and has continued to pay EHS providers. Dr. Ponder also showed examples of some of the data visualization graphics that the Research and Policy Analysis team has created to help the agency's leaders make policy decisions.
- The Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration shared DECAL's plan for responding to the Governor's instructions to reduce spending for State Fiscal Year 2021 on state funds by 14%. The proposal calls for \$53 million in cuts to Georgia's Pre-K Program by reducing instructional days and teacher planning days as well as eliminating the number of funded slots from 84,000 to 80,000. Additionally, DECAL proposes \$8.6 million in cuts to Child Care Services, by eliminating one open staff position, redistributing federal funds to cover staff salaries, and shifting all 3,000 Quality Rated Grant slots to CAPS slots.

Following the division reports, Ms. Harper invited public comments. Special Assistant to the Commissioner Quandra Collins read three comments submitted through the GoToWebinar chatbox. Quandra also noted that questions were received throughout the meeting and that DECAL will provide responses on the website FAQ pages.

At 11:01, Ms. Harper asked if there was any other business for the Board, and, there being none, she announced the date of the next meeting, August 27, 2020, and adjourned the meeting.