

# Decidedly DECAL

*Highlighting the Events That Shape Who We Are*



## November 2017 - In This Issue

- [By the Numbers](#)
- [Follow DECAL on Social Media](#)
- [Decidedly DECAL Seeking Contributors](#)
- [2017 Penny Wars Winners](#)
- [SCCP Update](#)
- [New Faces and Places](#)
- [November Birthdays](#)
- [Board of Early Care and Learning](#)
- [Virtual Suggestion Box](#)
- [Commissioner's Corner](#)
- [Georgia's Pre-K Week](#)
- [Division Updates](#)
- [Person on the Street](#)
- [Fall Fun at DECAL](#)
- [A Look Back at the All Staff Meeting](#)
- [New Quality Rated Programs](#)

## DECAL By the Numbers

- 4,768** - Licensed child care programs in Georgia
- 5,147** - Completed CCS visits for FY2018
- 1,423** - Quality Rated child care programs in Georgia
- 80,333** - Four year olds attending Georgia's Pre-K Program
- 81,704,575** - Total meals served by Nutrition Services in FY2017

## Commissioner's Corner

*by Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs*



Dear DECAL Team,

The main point of my letter this month is short and simple: I want you to know how much I enjoyed being with all of you at our All Staff meeting on October 24th. I left the meeting encouraged and energized by your participation, your engagement, your sense of humor, and your commitment to DECAL and to the children and families of Georgia, and by the *connections* I was able to make with many of you.

I've had an opportunity to quickly review your responses to the survey we sent after the meeting. Based on the comments, many of you left the meeting feeling much like I did. You loved "the energy in the room;" "gathering everyone in one place;" "seeing and hearing from the Governor and First Lady;" "Reg;" "socializing;" "the breakout sessions with the Alliance;" "meeting new people;" and so much more.

You were also very straightforward in sharing parts of the day you liked least and topics/items you'd like covered in future staff meetings. I appreciate your honest, forthright opinions in these areas; I assure you they will help us plan differently next year.

Of course, as I read the comments from the survey, I couldn't help but smile because activities and parts of the day that some people liked *most* were the very activities and parts of the day that other people liked *least*...almost word for word. That confirms a lot of what we talked about during the day. DECAL is one department made up of over 600 unique individuals with different personality styles, life experiences, and temperaments...but we can still all move forward *together as a team* to accomplish the work the department is called to do.

## Follow DECAL on Social Media

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## Decidedly DECAL Welcomes Contributors

Got a nose for news?



During the high school-themed All Staff Meeting, we learned that many people on the DECAL team have experience as editors or writers for their high school newspapers or annuals. Don't you miss it? We would love to have you submit articles from your division for Decidedly DECAL and will include your byline and photo with your story. Just get your supervisor's approval and contact Shannon Williams, Communications Coordinator, for more information. Join the team making news at DECAL!

## Pre-K and Instructional Supports Dominates in 2017 Penny Wars

Congratulations to Georgia's Pre-K Program and Instructional Supports on winning the 2017 Penny Wars with a final score of 22,179. Finance finished second with a score of 5,427, followed by IT with a score of 4,319, and CAPS with a score of 3,416.

Thanks to everyone who participated in Penny Wars 2017. The real winners are Georgia's youngest learners! We have decided to donate all of the money raised through Penny Wars to our new Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning which recently received its non-profit status and can now accept donations to further early childhood education initiatives in Georgia. The Foundation will also be offered as a charity you can support through The Campaign.

And I submit to you that our differences (e.g., loving the "mirror activity" or hating it) can make us stronger and more real.

As we look forward to our national celebration of Thanksgiving later this month, I can honestly say that I am thankful for having a job serving Georgia's children and families with a competent, committed, compassionate group of co-workers like you.

## Governor, First Lady Help Celebrate Georgia Pre-K Week



Governor Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal joined Assistant Commissioner for Georgia's Pre-K Program and Instructional Supports Susan Adams and Voices for Georgia's Children Executive Director Dr. Erica Fener Sitkoff for the kickoff of Georgia Pre-K Week at the North Fulton Child Development Center, one of the original pilot sites for Georgia's Pre-K Program 25 years ago. Hundreds of state and local leaders helped celebrate the 25th birthday of Georgia's Pre-K Program by visiting classrooms across the state and reading to students. Governor Zell Miller launched Georgia's lottery-funded Pre-K program in 1992 as a pilot program serving 750 four-year-old children. Since then, Georgia's Pre-K Program has laid a solid foundation for academic excellence and future success in the lives of approximately 1.6 million children.



## Still Time to Donate to The Campaign



Carrie Ashbee

Great News! You can now support The Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning through the State Charitable Contributions Program by clicking [HERE](#).

Why invest in Early Education?

Every \$1 you invest into high-quality early education results in savings of up to \$16 in costs related to criminal justice, welfare, special education and grade retention.

What we do.

The Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning makes strategic investments to improve and expand high-quality early education to help ensure all children in Georgia are prepared to succeed when they enter kindergarten regardless of family income or location.

Support the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning efforts by making a tax-deductible donation that will enhance the lives of Georgia's youngest learners and their families.

**DONATE TODAY.**

For questions, please contact [cashbee@GAearlyED.org](mailto:cashbee@GAearlyED.org) or

## Division Updates

### System Reform

In December 2016, the DECAL Advisory Committee adopted the following: Quality Rated eligible providers must be star rated by December 31, 2020 to continue to receive Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) funding. Quality Rated bonus packages will not be awarded after December 31, 2020.

To be eligible for a bonus package, programs must meet the following guidelines:

1. Participate in Quality Rated by June 30, 2018
2. Receive a one, two, or three star rating by December 31, 2020
3. Have received less than three bonus packages

### Legal

The Legal Department is in the process of hiring for the following three positions: Records Unit Document and Archiving Specialist, Policy and Training Specialist, and Criminal Records Check Supervisor.

### Human Resources

Open Enrollment deadline is approaching: Annual Open Enrollment (OE) for the 2018 Plan Year of the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) and will end on November 3, 2017 at 11:59 p.m. All eligible employees may select their 2018 health care elections online at [www.mySHBPga.adp.com](http://www.mySHBPga.adp.com).

Training Opportunities: A new training calendar is out for October through December. Remember to copy your supervisor on any class you would like to attend. DECAL University is back: November 17 - Deep Dive into Quality Rated; November 30 - Research and Policy Analysis; and December 7 - System Reform promotes access to Quality Rated. Times to be determined.

### Pre-K

During Georgia Pre-K Week 2017, the Governor and First Lady and 128 other state leaders-- including 77 Representatives, 23 Senators, 3 Congressmen, 12 members of the Governor's staff, and many state Commissioners-- made 212 visits to Georgia's Pre-K classrooms.

Also 450+ centers registered with Voices for Georgia's Children to host their own events with local leaders. Local leaders hosted by these centers included mayors, city council members, local businessmen, firemen, policemen, and members of the Armed Forces.

### Child Care Services

## 2017 Spirit of DECAL Winners

Congratulations to 2017 Spirit of DECAL Award winners Keturah, Chad, and Rhonda!



Thank you Governor Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal for helping us honor our 2017 Spirit of DECAL Award Winners Keturah Washington, Chad Paul, and Rhonda Gunn. Highlights from the ceremony can be seen here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUwoMh2FfXI>.

## New Faces and Places

Congratulations to the following employees who joined the DECAL team in October:

**Finance** welcomes Budget Analyst Althea Diahann Curry.

**IT** welcomes Telecommunications Administrator Alkadir Abdulkadir.

## November Birthdays



Best wishes go out to the following DECAL employees who celebrate birthdays this month:

- 1 - Tammie Baldwin
- 1 - Alison Benson
- 1 - Connie Fisher
- 2 - Robin Currie
- 3 - Rachel Fowler
- 4 - Rian Ringsrud
- 4 - Keturah Washington
- 6 - Leah Klatzker
- 6 - Chrische' Walker
- 8 - Arlene Green
- 9 - Leslie Truman
- 10 - Shannon Carroll
- 10 - Charlie Wilson
- 11 - Shani Drake
- 11 - Jill Vandenbos

Child Care Services began the annual license fee payment season on November 1.

CCS training for "Discover, Create, Imagine - Developing Lesson Plans for Young Children" has begun across the state with dates through the end of March 2018.

One-day training is offered to all birth through five teachers working in a child care program. It will focus on planning meaningful lessons using the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), and teachers will learn how to use the PEACH website to search for developmentally appropriate activities and to develop a lesson plan.

Currently, CCS has four vacancies: three in the regions, and a new receptionist position in Atlanta.

## Audits and Compliance

Audits is wrapping up the Summer Food Services Program, and the new fiscal year is underway for the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

## Person on the Street

*If you could pick a super power, what would it be?*



Tikiyha Ancrum, Nutrition Health Educator:

If I had a superpower, it would be self-multiplication! Being the mother of four children, which includes a three month old, self-multiplication would come in handy! I know my selection sounds selfish, but I would use my superpower to save humanity, sometimes...



Jasmine Barnes, System Reform Administrative Assistant:

If I could pick a super power, I would like to be a SUPER LINGUIST, meaning I would be able to innately speak and write ALL the languages of this world beyond fluently. I would be able to speak ancient languages, alien languages, and even animal languages!



Bridgette Bivins, CAPS Family Support Consultant:

My super power would be for money to appear at the snap of my fingers. This power will give me the opportunity to travel all over the world and end hunger and homelessness.

Carol Hartman, Director of Policy and System Reform:

Flying would be my super power - so I can avoid all of the traffic commuting to work!

12 - Tara Davis  
 12 - Olivia Kyle  
 13 - Colleen Covey  
 13 - Andrea McFarland  
 14 - Jessica Albright  
 14 - Jessica Grant  
 14 - Christi Moore  
 15 - Shenina Broaders  
 16 - Shyreeta Hicks  
 16 - Nikiesha Neil  
 17 - Colette Bolds  
 17 - George Davis  
 17 - Brenda Haynesworth  
 19 - Emily Groszoff  
 20 - Teresa Cummings  
 20 - Nicole Rocquemore  
 22 - Lisa Rambhajan  
 23 - Mike Chandler  
 24 - Kymberly Savage  
 25 - Valerie Blackmon  
 25 - Alva Huff  
 25 - Rita Lang  
 27 - JaKena Huggins  
 28 - Domonika Johnson  
 28 - Seydou Kompaore  
 29 - Donna Pearce  
 30 - Shayla Lewis

## Board of Early Care and Learning

*Supporting and guiding the mission and vision of Bright from the Start:*

### Board of Early Care and Learning

Kay Ford, Midway  
 First Congressional District  
 (Secretary)

Susan Harper, Albany  
 Second Congressional District  
 (Chair)

Kathy Howell, Carrollton  
 Third Congressional District

Phil Davis, Stone Mountain



## Fall Fun at DECAL

DECALers had lots of opportunities for some fall fun on October 31. It started with a morning journey to the Little Mystery Manor, which raised another \$71.67 to benefit The Campaign; and there were frights, sights, tricks and treats along the way provided by our HR team.

The three winners drawn from our Fortune Telling Fishbowl were:

- Beatrice Newton, CAPS Scholarship Administration Specialist
- Michelle Flynn, Finance Accounts Payable Accountant
- Deborah Helms, CAPS Quality Assurance and Training Administrator

The Employee Advisory Group sponsored a CHILI COOK-OFF, which netted \$308 for future State Employee Recognition Week events at DECAL. A total of 10 in-house chefs produced 11 chili entries that were sampled by over 60 employees! The votes determined the following:

- 1st Place: Barbara Sanders, IT Business Analyst
- 2nd Place: April Rogers, CCS Director of Enforcement Operations
- 3rd Place: It's a tie! Alicia Young, GA Pre-K Administrative Assistant, Christie Bearden, Legal Services Supervisor, and Kristi Burk, CAPS Scholarship Administration Specialist

Many thanks go out to Avery Jenkins, all of our chefs, EAG committee members, and volunteers throughout the agency who donated time, product, and assistance in making this such a successful and fun epicurean delight!



## A Look Back at the 2017 All Staff Meeting

Fourth Congressional District

Carlene Talton, Decatur  
Fifth Congressional District

Dawnn Henderson, Marietta  
Sixth Congressional District

Vacant  
Seventh Congressional District

Luann Purcell, Ed.D., Warner Robins  
Eighth Congressional District

Sheri Hooper, Gainesville  
Ninth Congressional District

Janice Gallimore, Greensboro  
Tenth Congressional District

Victor Morgan, Cartersville  
Eleventh Congressional District

Jerri Kropp, Statesboro  
Twelfth Congressional District  
(Vice Chair)

Melissa Boekhaus, MD., Mableton  
Thirteenth Congressional District

Tangela Johnson, Cohutta  
Fourteenth Congressional District

**Watch on POLAR**



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning



Let Us Hear  
From You!

## Employee Suggestion Program



ideas?

Visit the Virtual  
Suggestion Box now!

### The Faces of DECAL

DECAL faces featured in the banner of this issue are (L-R)  
Benjamin Appling, Valerie Strickland, Rosheda Doe, Jennifer  
McCreary, Tiffany Conley, Kimberly Davis, and Jackie Shivers.

Congratulations to the newest  QUALITY RATED<sup>®</sup> child care programs!

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Mt. Zion Childcare and Learning Center, ★<br>Jonesboro             | ★ Abby's Learning Center, Dublin                                 |
| Learning Expectations and Academic<br>Performance Academy, Atlanta | ★★ Nancy L. Simmons, Decatur                                     |
| Toddler University, Marietta ★★                                    | ★★★ Tammy M. Davis, Riverdale                                    |
| Akers Academy (Alpharetta), Alpharetta ★★                          | ★ A-1 Supreme Academy, Riverdale                                 |
| KinderCare Learning Center #1175, ★★<br>Duluth                     | ★ Once Upon a Time Academy & Daycare,<br>Stockbridge             |
| Roswell A.S.A.P., Roswell ★★                                       | ★★ Tammy J. Geter, Lithonia                                      |
| Valerie N. West, Snellville ★★                                     | ★★ A Brighter Choice Early Learning<br>Center, Inc., Fort Valley |
| Best Buddies Daycare & Preschool, Inc., ★★<br>Albany               | ★★ Love's Childcare Services, Inc.,<br>Statesboro                |
| Lillie's Lil Lamb Daycare and Learning ★★<br>Center III, McDonough | ★ Kids Time Learning Academy #2, Atlanta                         |
| Allison's Learning Center, Swainsboro ★                            | ★ Chapel Christian Academy, Lyons                                |
| Lisa A. Welch, Adel ★★   | ★★ Sugar & Spice Child Care, Statesboro                          |
| Angel's Childcare & Enrichment Center II, ★★<br>Savannah           | ★★ K.C.'s 24 Hr. Child Care Center,<br>Covington                 |
| Annette Cuyler, Savannah ★   | ★★ Cornerstone Academy 2, Martinez                               |
| Bright Star @ Old Griffin Road, McDonough ★                        | ★★ Mary C. Grant, Savannah                                       |
|  | ★ Glennville Christian Academy Daycare<br>Center, Glennville     |



*Congratulations to all of our  
QUALITY RATED™ child care programs  
who've increased their star rating  
in October!*

★★ Buford Head Start/Pre-K, Buford (1 to 2 stars)

★★ Avila R. Alba, Duluth (1 to 2 stars)

★★ Kerri L. Cason, Lavonia (1 to 2 stars)

★★★ Christ Chapel Learning Center, Zebulon (1 to 3 stars)

*Visit [qualityrated.org](http://qualityrated.org) to find  
Quality Rated child care programs in your area!*