

**DECAL - Bright from the Start****Meeting Minutes**

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**Board of Early Care and Learning Meeting  
5/16/2013 9:00:00 AM**Twin Tower - East Tower, 8th Floor, Oak Room  
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. SE, Atlanta, GA  
30334

Bobby D. Cagle, Commissioner

No Attendees

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Victor Morgan called the meeting to order. He welcomed board members, DECAL staff, and guests.

**2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

Kay Ford moved to accept the day's agenda. Kathy Howell seconded. The agenda was unanimously accepted. Carlene Talton moved to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2013, meeting of the board. Kay Ford seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

- a. \*Approve agenda for 5/16/13 meeting
- b. \*Approve minutes from 2/21/13 board meeting

**3. Board Inspiration**

Susan Harper delivered an inspiration in honor of Mother's Day and of Teacher Appreciation Week by sharing about her mother, who was also a teacher. She expressed appreciation for teachers across the state.

**4. Board Member Updates**

Victor Morgan recognized Penny Statham, lead infant teacher at Discovery Point Cumming, for receiving a Terri Lynne Lokoff/Children's Tylenol National Child Care Teacher Award. Ray Higgins presented her with a commendation from Governor Nathan Deal.

Mr. Morgan invited new board members to introduce themselves: Sherron L. Murphy, 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District; Tammy M. Lenkeit, 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District; Jerri J. Kropp, Ph.D., 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District; and Judy B. Neal, 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

Members of the board provided updates on their activities.

- Carlene Talton reported attending a nutrition promotion event sponsored by the Arby's Foundation at Hapeville Elementary with Keith Bostick and the Lieutenant Governor.

- Susan Harper reported participating in Read Across Georgia at Dougherty County Pre-K.
- Victor Morgan commended department staff for how they work with the public in support of children.

## **5. Bright from the Start Presentations**

### **a. Strategic Plan, Finance, Nutrition, Audits, & Legislative Updates**

Ray Higgins presented updates on the department's strategic plan, finances, nutrition programs, audits, and legislation pertaining to the department. (See slides.) He introduced the themes of the department's strategic plan. He gave an update on the state fiscal year 2013 amended budget, which includes a 3% reduction, and the fiscal year 2014 budget, which includes funding to return 10 instructional days to the Pre-K school year. He reviewed year-to-date expenditures and noted that lottery funds are restricted in their use to supporting Georgia's Pre-K. He reported the number of Child and Adult Care Food Program meals served and discussed recruitment efforts for the Summer Food Service Program. Kay Ford offered support in recruitment and requested a list of targeted counties.

Mr. Higgins gave an overview of the program audit of the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) subsidy program. He announced the agency has formed an audit unit and introduced the new audit director Dextral Austin.

Mr. Higgins reported the Governor's signing of House Bill 350 requiring national fingerprint background checks and of House Bill 354 modifying language and tightening the family day care home definition.

### **b. Child Care Services Update**

Kristie Lewis presented updates on Child Care Services (CCS). (See slides.) She stated 134 programs have been revoked for nonpayment of license fees. She explained that most of these represented family day care providers who were no longer operating. She presented a statistical overview of CCS monitoring. Ms. Lewis presented actions the agency needs to take in response to the passage of House Bills 350 and 354. The board will need to authorize the agency to move forward to write rules conforming to the new legislation. Ira Sudman explained that the Official Code of Georgia represents the laws passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor.

Kay Ford asked if board members would also need to be fingerprinted. Mr. Sudman explained that board members who visit child care programs only on rare occasions and always accompanied by someone who already has fingerprint clearance will not be required to submit to a background check; however, board members who visit programs frequently are encouraged to obtain the background check. Victor Morgan invited board members to attend community forums for discussing draft rules.

Kay Ford moved to authorize the department to move forward to draft rules relating to House Bill 354. Janice Gallimore seconded. Authorization was unanimously approved. Kathy Howell motioned to authorize the department to move forward to draft rules relating to House Bill 350. Dawnn Henderson seconded. Authorization was unanimously approved.

c. Break

d. Quality Initiatives Update

Keith Bostick presented updates on the CAPS Task Force. (See slides.) He stated the audit of the program recommended the use of technology to enhance program administration, for example, implementing a consistent method for identifying children served and tracking attendance. The department is coordinating these efforts with the Department of Human Services with which DECAL contracts to handle program enrollment and eligibility determination. He reported on the activities of the CAPS Task Force, a group of stakeholders convened to review CAPS policies and procedures.

e. Pre-K Update

Susan Adams introduced the department's Standards Coordinator, Laura Evans who presented an overview of the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). (See slides.) She reviewed the five domains and the standards/indicators structure. The GELDS are aligned with the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards. She also previewed the GELDS website. The GELDS are scheduled to be finalized in June, rolled out to early learning providers in the fall of 2013, and fully implemented in the fall of 2014.

Ms. Adams stated that the state does not have a standardized early learning assessment for ages zero to three. Georgia's Pre-K Program uses the Work Sampling System for assessment, and the

Work Sampling indicators have been aligned with the GELDS. In the following school year, all Pre-K classrooms will use the online version (Work Sampling Online), allowing assessment results to be attached to a child's Georgia Testing ID and transferred to the K-12 system where Kindergarten teachers can access them.

f. Commissioner's Updates

Commissioner Bobby Cagle presented updates on his activities. (See slides.) He reviewed stakeholder engagement efforts including: promotion of the Summer Food Service Program with the Arby's Foundation at Hapeville Elementary, including a \$5,000 grant to the school to promote better nutrition; the CAPS Task Force; and Georgia's Pre-K 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration activities. During Pre-K Week organized by Voices for Georgia's Children, 68% of state representatives visited a Pre-K classroom. The Commissioner chaired one leg of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education bus tour. The board will be invited to a Georgia Lottery Corporation anniversary celebration in Athens in June.

Commissioner Cagle reviewed elements of President Obama's proposal for early learning. States would be invited to serve all four-year-old children in families below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines in a *Pre-K for All* program; Head Start would then be focused on serving three year olds. States will be invited to apply for another round of the Early Learning Challenge grant later this year, and the department hopes to submit a competitive application.

Commissioner Cagle presented on the state's invitation to participate in Frontiers of Innovation, a group seeking to catalyze breakthrough innovations in early care and learning. Georgia is the second state selected to partner with them. The department will collaborate with the Department of Public Health, the Department of Community Health, and state universities in this effort. An official announcement will be made in the near future. He commented that Georgia is fortunate to have political leaders who are supportive of early childhood and have refrained from making it a partisan issue.

Victor Morgan invited Carolyn Salvador, Executive Director of the Georgia Child Care Association, to present Commissioner Cagle with the pen used to sign House Bill 350 in recognition of his leadership on the bill's passage.

g. Media Activity Update

Reg Griffin presented updates on media activity related to the agency. (See slides.) He explained why, as a publicly funded agency, the department receives media attention, and he described how the department pitches stories to the media. The agency seeks to be open and transparent in its public relations. He reported on media placements from February 21 through April.

Top stories included the passage of House Bill 350, Read Across Georgia, the release of the CAPS audit report, activities of the Coalition on Childhood Obesity, and the release of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) Report Card. Mr. Griffin also presented on the agency's social media activities through Facebook and Twitter. Video segments from Fox 5 Atlanta on parent planning for Georgia's Pre-K and on the dangers of leaving a child unattended in a hot car were shown. A video segment from WSB Channel 2 on child care programs not being required to carry liability insurance was also shown. Mr. Griffin also expressed the department's pleasure with a television special on WSB Channel 2 titled *Early Learning: A Smart Investment* that discussed the department's work, in particular Quality Rated. The special was the most watched program in its time slot in its second airing on Mother's Day.

## **6. Lunch & Committee Meetings**

Victor Morgan announced committee appointments. As Chair, he will rotate among committees. Committee meetings were held in separate rooms over lunch. All committee meetings are open to the public.

## **7. Public Hearing, 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

At 1 p.m. a rulemaking public hearing was held before the board. Department attorney Christie Bearden presided as the public hearing officer. Ms. Bearden explained the public hearing process and opened the hearing for public comment. A summary of comments follows.

1. Lisa Dawson, Georgia Department of Public Health, commented on the risks of unsafe sleep practices in relation to SIDS and expressed support for changing regulations to conform to the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
2. Dr. Terri McFadden, Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, expressed support for the proposed rule revisions related to infant sleep practices. She stated she was also representing Dr. Robert Wiskind, President of the Georgia Chapter.

## **8. Board Action on Rule Changes**

Rule revisions were brought before the board to align child care rules with the expanded recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics for safe sleep environments for child care learning centers, group day care homes, and family day care homes. Kathy Howell motioned to approve the rule amendment concerning child care learning centers. Kay Ford seconded. The amendment was unanimously approved by the board.

Sherron Murphy motioned to approve the rule amendment concerning group day care homes. Jerri Kropp seconded. The amendment was unanimously approved by the board.

Sherron Murphy motioned to approve the rule amendment concerning family day care homes. Janice Gallimore seconded. The amendment was unanimously approved by the board.

## **9. Committee Reports**

### **a. Budget & Finance**

Carlene Talton reported for the Budget and Finance Committee. The committee reviewed current year expenditures.

### **b. Programs & Rules Committee**

Sherron Murphy reported for the Programs Committee. The committee discussed the Pre-K Summer Transition Program offered this year in 126 classrooms; Quality Rated; and implementation of House Bill 354.

### **c. Ethics**

Susan Harper reported for the Ethics Committee. The committee discussed the review of board bylaws. Recommended corrections and changes to sections 1 and 2 of the bylaws were presented to board members for consideration. The board will vote on their approval at the August board meeting.

## **10. Adjournment**

The next meeting of the board will take place August 15, 2013. Kay Ford motioned to adjourn the meeting. Janice Gallimore seconded. Chair Victor Morgan adjourned the meeting at 1:42 p.m.

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Board Chair

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Board Secretary