

Board of Early Care and Learning

Meeting Summary

May 11, 2017

Attendees

Board Members:

Victor Morgan, Susan Harper, Jerri Kropp, Melissa Boekhaus, Phil Davis, Kay Ford, Tangela Johnson, Luann Purcell, Carlene Talton

Guests:

Kelly Farr, Melissa Johnson, Brian Lipton, Lynn Manfredi/Pettit, Ashley Hope, Jan Reyes, Alecia Parks, Paul Walker

Bright from the Start Staff:

Commissioner Amy Jacobs, Craig Detweiler, Reg Griffin, Ray Higgins, Kristie Lewis, Ira Sudman, Woody Dover, Falita Flowers, Carol Hartman, Sharon McPherson, Rian Ringsrud, Robin Stevens, Mark Waits, Jessie Bruno, Faith Duncan, William Cox, Kristen Huie, Laura Wagner, Donna Johnson, Carrie Ashbee, Brian McKeen, April Rogers, Pam Stevens, Denise Jenson, Kori Woodward-Dickens

The May 11, 2017 meeting of the Board of Early Care and Learning opened with the approval of the day's agenda and the February 16, 2017 board meeting minutes. Inspiration honoring outgoing board chair Victor Morgan was given by Dr. Luann Purcell.

Members of the board provided updates on their activities:

- Susan Harper attended a CAPS family forum in Tifton in March. Forum was a collaboration between DECAL and UGA. Families were given \$20 and asked how they would use the money for child care. Also, Ms. Harper had dinner with a friend who had no idea that Dougherty County had Pre-K. This illustrates how important it is that we talk about all that DECAL does across the state with our friends and family.
- Phil Davis was reminded about our work recently. While driving, he saw a child care business whose sign indicated it was Quality Rated in lettering larger than the business' name.
- Tangela Johnson spoke with a friend who wants to start a family day care. She will have a second meeting with her to discuss what services/resources DECAL can provide and tell her about being Quality Rated.
- Melissa Boekhaus, works with Wellstar which is partnering with Cobb County to promote early literacy. The office is talking to parents who come in to Wellstar about the importance of reading to infants and toddlers.
- Jerri Kropp has a new granddaughter who is now 3 weeks old. Her mom has no background in quality child care, but is staying at home. She has put out a call for child care centers on Instagram. Kropp has discussed with her how to use South Carolina's rating system to find a quality center.

DECAL staff provided updates on their program areas:

- Ray Higgins, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, presented on the last quarter's budget. DECAL is anticipating a surplus of lottery dollars which will be returned to the state. The Summer Transition Program will be able to add 27 classes. The audit is finished and DECAL is in good standing. The legislative session has ended. SB 97 and 98 failed to pass.
- Elisabetta Kasfir, Assistant Commissioner for Federal Programs, provided updates on the CAPS transition project. She introduced Laura Wagner and Donna Johnson, the two Family Support Directors for CAPS. Wagner and Johnson talked about the community and family forums recently conducted around the state. The meetings had good participation and were facilitated by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government.
- Commissioner Amy Jacobs, explained the plan for the Center of Early Language and Literacy. The Commissioner is part of a small group of stakeholders working with Georgia College and State University to establish the Center that will support teachers from birth through third grade. The Commissioner introduced Carrie Ashbee, the Executive Director of the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning. DECAL is represented on the newly formed Older Adults Cabinet because of the Child and Adult Food Care Program that feeds older adults in eligible adult day care. Commissioner Jacobs also explained the DECAL's internship program and introduced current interns Shannon Williams, Isha Barrie, Ryan Williams, Afoma Okoye, and Kiersten Nicholson.
- Kristie Lewis, Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services, reminded the board about the proposed changes to the rules for child care learning centers and family child care learning homes that they would vote on later in the meeting. She then introduce April Rogers, CCS Director for Policy and Enforcement.

- Rogers reviewed the enforcement chart/formula used by licensing consultants and shared data about enforcement and adverse actions gathered since the new chart/formula were implemented. See slides for details from the charts and graphs. In FY17 there were more enforcement actions than the previous year.
- Faith Duncan, Director of Field Operations for Georgia's Pre-K Program, spoke on behalf of Susan Adams. The Pre-K application process for the 2017-2018 school year has begun. 1,052 applications have been received and will be reviewed by the Pre-K consultants. The Rising Pre-K and Rising Kindergarten summer transition programs will begin soon. This week the Pre-K Teacher of the Year finalists were announced.
 - Ashley Hope, Assessment Specialist for Early Learning Measures Georgia DOE, presented a report on the new kindergarten assessment, the GKIDS Readiness Check. This tool allows teachers to understand who their students are by measuring three foundations: Foundations of School Success, English Language Arts, and Mathematics.
- Ira Sudman, Chief Legal Officer, introduced Brian McKeen, attorney responsible for the department's security and privacy.
 - Brian McKeen, Privacy Attorney, explained the difference between security and privacy and illustrated the need to be vigilant about both.
- Reg Griffin, Chief Communications Officer, reviewed media coverage since the last board meeting and updated social media numbers. Announced that Commissioner Jacobs is now on Twitter and encouraged board members to follow her @CommJacobs. Showed clip from DECALTV, short videos that will provide monthly updates to staff. The annual Look Again campaign will kick off on June 14, at 10:30 am at the State Capitol North Wing. Governor Deal and the First Lady will attend.

After lunch and committee meetings, Board Chair Victor Morgan opened the Public Hearing. At this point board members Kathy Howell and Dawnn Henderson joined the meeting by telephone. Kori Woodward-Dickens, Public Hearing Officer, explained how the comment period would run. Mr. Paul Walker was the only person to sign up. He talked about the importance of having clear language in the rules, and was supportive of the proposed rule changes. He was concerned about the format, and felt that having rules listed may make them easier to understand by the public and providers rather than having rules explained in paragraph form. Having no further public speakers, Dickens recessed the hearing to allow official business to proceed.

Board committees gave their reports:

- Carlene Talton reported for the Budget and Finance Committee. The committee heard additional details from Ray Higgins on the audit reports.
- Jerri Kropp reported for the Programs and Rules Committee. The committee heard additional details on the CAPS transition. Falita Flowers told the committee about the anticipated meal requirements going into effect on October 1. Faith Duncan explained the Pre-K application process further and shared the great work they're doing in Instructional Supports.
- Susan Harper reported for the System Reform Committee. In March federal reviewers came down for a fiscal review of Early Head Start. The Quality Rated Policy and Partnership is looking at families served by CAPS.

Kori Woodward-Dickens reconvened the floor for any further public comments. With no further comments, the Public Hearing adjourned and the board proceeded with action on the proposed rule changes. The Board Chair asked for a motion to adopt/accept the proposed rule changes for Family Child Care Learning Homes. Susan Harper motioned, and Kay Ford seconded. The rule changes for Family Child Care Learning Homes were adopted unanimously. The Board Chair asked for a motion to adopt/accept the proposed rule changes for Child Care Learning Centers. Melissa Boekhaus motioned and Kay Ford seconded. The rule changes for Child Care Learning Centers were adopted unanimously.

Board business moved to board election for new board chair and Victor Morgan asked for nominations. Phil Davis nominated Susan Harper. Ms. Harper was unanimously elected and will begin her term at the next board meeting. Board Chair Morgan asked for nominations to fill Harper's vacancy as Vice Chair. Kay Ford nominated Jerri Kropp. All approved, and Kropp will begin as Vice Chair at the next meeting.

The Commissioner thanked Victor Morgan for his years of service to DECAL as the Chairman, and congratulated Susan Harper in her new role as Board Chair. The next meeting of the Board of Early Care and Learning will take place August 17, 2017.

The Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 1:39 p.m.