

Board of Early Care and Learning
Meeting Summary
November 16, 2017

Attendees

Board Members: Susan Harper, Jerri Kropp, Victor Morgan, Melissa Boekhaus, Phil Davis, Carlene Talton, Dawnn Henderson, Sheri Hooper, Kathy Howell

Guests: *Melissa Johnson, Erica Sitkoff, Kelly Maxwell, Pam Tatum, Jessica Woltjen, Joe Perreault, Kelly Farr, Bibi Omar, Ellen Reynolds*

Bright from the Start Staff: Commissioner Amy Jacobs, Elisabetta Kasfir, Craig Detweiler, Reg Griffin, Ray Higgins, Kristie Lewis, Ira Sudman, Kristin Bernhard, Susan Adams, Christi Moore, Bentley Ponder, Pam Stevens, Denise Jenson, Falita Flowers, Carol Hartman, Sharon McPherson, Rian Ringsrud, Woody Dover, Allison Setterlind, Robin Stevens, Donna Johnson, Jessie Bruno, Quandra Collins, William Cox, Amy Page, Randy Hudgins, Jasmine Barnes, Jill O'Meara, Liz Young

The November 16, 2017 meeting of the Board of Early Care and Learning opened with the approval of the day's agenda and the August 17, 2017 board meeting minutes. Board member Sheri Hooper shared the inspiration.

Members of the board provided updates on their activities:

- Dawnn Henderson read during Georgia Pre-K Week to a class in Marietta.
- Sheri Hooper also read to a Pre-K class at Jones Elementary.
- Susan Harper read to the Dougherty County Pre-K. She was invited back to be the grand marshal for the book parade.
- Melissa Boekhaus read to Bright Horizons in Buckhead. Board chair Susan Harper shared that Melissa was named the Young Physician of the Year for 2017.
- Susan Harper also announced that Janice Gallimore, one of the founding members of the board, has resigned from the board.

DECAL staff provided updates on their program areas:

- Ray Higgins, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, presented the budget report for the last quarter ending September 30. The budget is on track. During the upcoming legislative session DECAL will be tracking HB 494 which addresses federal changes to criminal records checks (CRC). Nutrition Services reached three targeted counties and served 9.8 million meals during the Summer Food Service Program 2017. The CAPS transition is continuing and nearing completion.
- Kristin Bernhard, Deputy Commissioner of System Reform presented updates on Georgia's Parents and Children Thriving Together (PACTT) grant. Georgia was one of just five states chosen for the grant. Ms. Bernhard shared that 68% of all child care learning centers are participating in Quality Rated, and as of November 2017, 1,426 child care programs in Georgia have received a star rating.
- Elisabetta Kasfir, Assistant Commissioner for Federal Programs, provided updates on the CAPS transition project. The CAPS unit has relocated to the 2nd and 5th floors of the Agriculture Building. It is expected that 100% of the eligibility process for CAPS will be operated by DECAL by the end of December. Donna Johnson, Family Support Director, explained the goals of the Family Support unit. Sixty family support consultants will be assigned to the five regions of the state, 12 to each region. These consultants will work with families to provide information and referrals to resources that can help families overcome challenges as they work toward self-sufficiency.
- Commissioner Amy Jacobs, announced that Nathan Leatherwood and Jodi McNamara have been named this year's Pre-K Teachers of the Year. She shared about DECAL's All Staff meeting on October 24 which was also attended by board members Phil Davis and Kathy Howell. The Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning has received its 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS. Next steps for the foundation include setting up the non-profit's board.

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- Kristie Lewis, Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services, presented on progress with annual licensing and monitoring visits. The division has made 5,662 regulatory visits from July 1 to November. 98.5% of the licensed child care programs are in good standing. Dr. Kelly Maxwell, co-director of Child Trends, presented the preliminary findings from a study of license-exempt programs in Georgia. The study found that license-exempt programs are statistically different in how well they meet basic health and safety practices.
- Susan Adams, Assistant Commissioner of Pre-K and Instructional Supports Services, along with Bentley Ponder, Senior Director of Research and Policy Analysis, presented findings from a study of Georgia's Pre-K Program. The study compared third grade test scores of a group of children who attended Georgia's Pre-K to those who did not attend Georgia's Pre-K. The study found that for those children who did attend Georgia's Pre-K, there are small but meaningful differences. Dr. Christi Moore, Director of Professional Learning, provided updates on the revision process for the Georgia's Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (WKC's). Dr. Moore also discussed the planned updates to Georgia's Professional Development System.
- Allison Setterlind, Head Start Collaboration Director, along with Randy Hudgins, Senior Research and Policy Analyst, presented on the ways that DECAL supports Georgia Head Start. Allison thanked the IT team and Jim Keith for their support of Head Start grantees and CACDS. Randy presented an overview on the decrease in absenteeism in Head Start over the past year, which can be attributed in part to the collaboration office's work. Randy created similar reports for each grantee in Georgia.

Because of meeting space issues, board committees met together:

- Sharon McPherson provided additional details and a handout on DECAL's budget for this quarter and said the budget is on track.
- Kristie Lewis reminded everyone that it is time for child care providers to pay annual license fees; fees are due by December 1. Susan Adams distributed the new Georgia's Pre-K brochure to the board; the brochures double as a coloring activity for children. Elisabetta Kasfir noted that stakeholder engagement relating to the CAPS transition project is ongoing. In July CAPS initiated a requirement that providers update their information with DECAL annually.
- Denise Jenson provided some updates on changes to the Quality Rated assessor reports to speed up the rating process. As part of the transition to the new ITERS-3 rating scale, the creators of the instrument will conduct a joint training for the DECAL assessors and staff and some Head Start staff. Carol Hartman reported that all of the Early Head Start partnership child care programs are participating in Quality Rated.

Susan Harper opened the meeting for public comment. No one had signed up to comment, so Board Chair Harper adjourned the public hearing.

She reminded everyone that the next meeting of the board will take place February 15, 2018.

Board Chair Harper adjourned the meeting at 1:02 p.m.