
Board of Early Care and Learning

Board of Early Care and Learning Meeting
Thursday, February 20, 2020 — 9:00 a.m.
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE – East Tower
Oak Conference Room
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Amy M. Jacobs, Commissioner

Meeting Minutes

Board Members

Susan Harper (Chair)
Phil Davis (Vice Chair)
Kristy Beam
Jen Bennecke
Debra Brock

Kathy Howell
Theresa Magpuri-Lavell
Kristin Morrissey
Luann Purcell

Public Guests

Charlotte Pelz, Brandi Swain, Caroline White, Heather Williams, Johnathon Hines, Katie Landes, Kayla Washington, Sheila Gooden, Jessica Woltjen

Bright from the Start Staff

Amy Jacobs, Commissioner
Rian Ringsrud, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration
Susan Adams, Deputy Commissioner for Pre-K and Instructional Supports
Pam Stevens, Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services
Bentley Ponder, Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships
Dennis Brice, Chief Information Officer
Reg Griffin, Chief Communications Officer
Ira Sudman, Chief Legal Officer
Farouk Baksh, Snr Director of Information Technology
Randy Hudgins, Director of Research and Policy
Michael Rodgers, Director of Finance
Shawnell Johnson, Director of Family Support
Donna Johnson, Director of Family Support
Carrie Ashbee, DECAL Foundation Executive Director
Maria Goss, Early Head Start Partnership Director
Jackie Shivers, Director of Quality Initiatives
Faith Duncan, Director of Pre-K Field Operations

Jennie Couture, Practice Support Services Director
Laura Wagner, QR Policy & Partnerships Director
Denise Jenson, Director of QR
Ben Appling, Director of Audits & Compliance
Catherine Broussard, CCS Process & Policy Director
Clayton Bassett, Director of PDG
Melvia Usury, Budget Administrator
Meghan McNail, Summer Transition Outreach Manager
Angela Melton, Manager of CCR&R Contracts
Bridget Ratajczak, Family Development Supervisor
Jill O'Meara, Community Coordinator
Ann Panzica, Family Training Specialist
Margrett Stephens, Professional Learning Specialist
Woody Dover, Budget Administrator
Jessie Bruno, Research Analyst
Quandra Collins, Executive Administrative Assistant
Demetrius Wilburn, IT Support Specialist
Ebony Ford, IT Support Specialist
Charles Robinson, Communications Intern
Sonja Steptoe, QIP Communications Manager

1. Call to Order

Board Chair Susan Harper called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

2. Welcome

Ms. Harper welcomed the board members, Department of Early Care and Learning staff, and public guests. She thanked Vice Chair Phil Davis for chairing the November 2019 Board meeting in her absence while she was recuperating.

3. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Ms. Harper asked for a motion to accept the day's agenda. Mr. Davis moved to accept, and Ms. Beam seconded. The Board accepted the minutes unanimously. Ms. Harper then asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 21, 2019, Board meeting. Ms. Bennecke moved to approve, and Ms. Brock seconded. The Board approved the minutes unanimously.

4. Inspiration

Ms. Purcell substituted for Board Member Christina Washell and provided the Inspiration. She spoke about her new baby grandson who has received services from Babies Can't Wait and is now in hospice care. Using that experience and the examples of teams of geese flying, she encouraged the group to remember the benefits of sharing leadership, building a sense of community, and providing mutual support.

5. Board Member Updates

Board members provided updates on their recent activities:

Ms. Harper reminded the group that March 2 is Read Across America Day and encouraged Board members to participate. She will be reading to Pre-K students at Dougherty County School. Ms. Morrissey visited the Hudgens Early Education Center at Gwinnett Technical College, a Quality Rated provider, to witness the activity at a star-rated facility. She said she was impressed and inspired by the experience. Ms. Brock discussed the success of the Second Chance Breakfast program at her school, Red Bud Elementary in Calhoun. Ms. Harper told the members about an article in the Albany newspaper profiling a child care facility that is implementing the LENA early language and literacy program and discussed the value of training early education teachers about the importance of having verbal interactions with children during infancy and beyond. Ms. Magpuri-Lavell told the Board that the Deal Center has launched a pilot program in family literacy using a two-generational approach starting in Barrow County. Ms. Bennecke attended the joint School Board Association and School Superintendent Association Conference in December where K-12 school leaders discussed the importance of early learning. She also participated in a Voices for Georgia's Children and Junior League of Atlanta event that included 2020 Georgia Pre-K Week planning activities.

6. Bright from the Start Presentations

Members of the executive staff provided updates on their program areas:

a. Commissioner's Update

Commissioner Amy Jacobs described upcoming events and invited Board members to attend, including the Summer Food Service Program Summit on February 25, 2020, which helps the Program meet its sponsor recruitment goals; Children's Day at the Capitol on March 17, 2020, that is a gathering to support children's organizations; and Literacy Day at the Capitol on March 20, 2020, that will feature the Governor and the First Lady discussing the literacy activities underway throughout the state, including the Quality Rated (QR) Language and Literacy Endorsement with the Endorsement pilot site directors in attendance. She also recapped and updated the Board on progress made on the Endorsement. She noted that Phase 1, completed in 2019, focused on expert input from a panel that provided recommendations on data, supports, and evaluation for the Endorsement. Phase 2 that is ongoing in 2020 is being supported by recommendations from a professional development advisory group (PDAG) and centers on a pilot of the Endorsement with administrators and teachers in the pilot programs receiving professional development in language and literacy instruction. Participants who successfully complete the pilot will earn an Endorsement and receive additional supports at its culmination. Work in Phase 3 will begin in 2021 and possibly will include a second pilot and efforts to align the Endorsement with other revisions to Quality Rated. She shared details about the work of the PDAG, which consists of providing feedback related to content delivery and resources for professional development to support the Endorsement, and supporting DECAL and its research partners in unpacking the findings from the evaluation of the pilot. She also provided an overview of the pilot. It will involve approximately 12 programs selected by geographic location, star rating, date of star rating, and demographics. The Endorsement at the

program level includes infant to Pre-K classrooms. The pilot will be conducted from January to December 2020. The Commissioner said Endorsements will be awarded at end of the 12-month pilot based on growth plan each program develops. The programs receive various supports and resources throughout the pilot. She then introduced Lead Research & Policy Analyst Jessie Bruno, who described the activities of the Census 2020 Complete Count Committee for Georgia and shared resources for awareness, outreach, and education in communities. Ms. Bruno also showed videos recorded by Commissioner Jacobs and the Pre-K Teachers of the Year encouraging people to complete the 2020 Census. Following that presentation, the Commissioner introduced the Pre-K Teachers of the Year, Johnathon Hines and Heather Williams, who delivered presentations about their background, their teaching experiences, and their activities celebrating their selection and serving as ambassadors for Georgia's Pre-K Program. Mr. Hines, who teaches Pre-K at Barack Obama Elementary in DeKalb County, said his favorite part of teaching Pre-K is that he gets to ensure that a child's first encounter with a teacher is positive, nurturing, and, exhilarating. "I love seeing my students matriculate from August to May by becoming independent, building self-confidence, and performing at their highest potential. Teaching 4-year-olds has given me the opportunity to make their first impression of school a lasting impression!" For him, the biggest highlight of being named Teacher of the Year was appearing on the Kelly Clarkson Show. Ms. Harper presented him with a Board Commendation in honor of his selection. Ms. Williams, who teaches at Central Georgia Technical College Child Development Center in Houston County, said her favorite part of teaching Pre-K is the children. For her the best part of being Teacher of the Year has been "meeting and forming relationships with other educators who serve as excellent mentors." Ms. Harper also presented her with a Board Commendation in honor of her selection.

b. Finance, Legislative, and Administrative Update

Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration Rian Ringsrud provided an update on the agency's state fiscal year (SFY) 2020 budget activity during the second quarter, as of December 31, 2019, and reported that spending and funding are generally on track, with 47% of funding remaining and 50% of the year remaining. He noted that the Quality Initiatives (QI) line item has a remaining balance of 33%, which might seem like a significant variance from the 50% balance overall for the year. But he explained that the footnote to that table states that the expenditure amounts on the table include encumbrances, which are instances in which DECAL has obligated funds but hasn't yet spent them. Due to governmental accounting rules, however, they must be reported as expenditures. Quality Initiatives has just over \$22 million in encumbrances and only \$17 million in actual expenditures. So even though it looks like QI has spent \$36 million and isn't on track, in reality it is on track. He also pointed out that the line item pertaining to state lottery funds expenditures is noteworthy, in light of the fact that the lottery funding is where DECAL has taken its largest budget reduction of just over \$1 million. The line item reflects that there also is 50% of the funds remaining with half the year remaining, which Mr. Ringsrud said is a really good sign and shows that DECAL is on pace to take the budget reductions in good standing. Lastly, he pointed out the state general and federal funds. He noted that the state general funds show that DECAL has 82% of its funds left and 39% of its federal funds left. He explained that the reason for the difference in the two amounts is related to spending patterns in the CAPS Program. Through the fall and winter, DECAL made weekly payment to CAPS providers, which is usually around \$6 million a week, almost exclusively with federal funds, in order to spend down the federal funds to meet federal funding liquidation rules. As the agency rolls into spring, DECAL will start making those payments almost exclusively with state funds. As that starts to happen, the percentage of those funds remaining will trend back toward matching the percentage of the year remaining. Mr. Ringsrud also announced that DECAL completed its exit conference as part of conclusion of the financial audit conducted by the state. He reported that once again there were no findings of deficiencies or material weaknesses, a streak the agency has maintained for ten-plus consecutive years. The auditors will release the statewide signal audit at the end of February and around that time Board members will receive closure letters pertaining to the audit. He then turned to the status of the budget cuts the agency was mandated to make. During the August 2019 Board meeting, he had outlined the budget submission that included cuts to Child Care Services (CCS) and the Georgia's Pre-K Program, which were approved. In September 2019 that request was submitted to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget. In January 2020 the Governor released his budget recommendations which increased the reductions DECAL had proposed for the two programs by approximately \$300,000 a year. Mr. Ringsrud explained that

DECAL had proposed several reductions including eliminating one vacant position in CCS that would save \$72,839, and redistributing funding for salaries and benefits that would shave off \$66,987 and \$285,400 in the subsequent year, as well as limiting the implementation of additional FY2020 CAPS funding from the legislature amounting to \$300,000, for a total of \$438,826 in adjusted FY2020 and \$658,239 in FY2021. The Governor's office agreed with the three areas to be cut but recommended additional redistributed funding for salaries and benefits totaling \$170,337 for 2020 and \$408,810 for 2021. The Governor also raised the amount that DECAL wouldn't implement to \$500,000 of added 2020 CAPS funding, for a total of \$743,176 cuts in 2020 and \$981,649 in 2021. In Pre-K, DECAL proposed a series of cuts including reducing the money allocated for temporary staff positions by \$150,000; reducing spending for computer equipment by \$100,000, and reducing and reprioritizing three contractual obligations by \$260,000 in 2020 and by \$530,000 in 2021, for a total of \$476,920 in adjusted FY2020 and \$715,379 in FY2021. But the Governor's office also recommended additional reductions, namely reducing and reprioritizing a fourth contractual obligation for a total of \$704,058 in 2020 and \$530,000 in 2021. The Governor also asked DECAL to eliminate one additional vacant position, for a Pre-K specialist, to save \$77,760 in 2020 and \$81,149 in 2021. Ms. Bennecke asked what contractual obligations were reduced and reprioritized. He explained that one contract covered maintenance of a Pre-K database and cancelling plans to upgrade it. Another contract with Family Connection Partnerships for community collaborative services was reduced, as was another for temporary staffing services. Mr. Davis asked about revenue projections for the state during this fiscal year. Mr. Ringsrud said some months have seen flat growth while in January they were up by about 4.5%, which followed a similar pattern for the previous year. In general he says the state is on track to exceed last year's revenues. The amended 2020 budget bill has passed the House and the Senate is currently considering it. Mr. Ringsrud also updated the status of three bills before the legislature affecting the agency. He described HB 793, which approved \$2,000 raises for Pre-K Lead Teachers, 5% raises for Pre-K Assistant Teachers, \$1,000 raises for state employees making less than \$40,000 and \$1.7 million for the Pre-K teacher supplement. SB 354 would require CAPS to allow the pursuit of a four-year college degree as an approved activity to qualify for the subsidy, which the Program is already planning. The third bill, HR 421, created a Study Committee on Infant and Toddler Social and Emotional Health, which recommended creating an infant and childhood mental health coordinator position at DECAL.

c. Information Technology Update

The Commissioner introduced the Board members to Chief Information Officer Dennis Brice, who provided details of important projects underway, including ongoing upgrades that will comply with state CyberBoard Recommendations, simplify and secure DECAL's IT services; bring innovation and new solutions; and improve quality. He described the IT vision and strategy of growing the landscape & complexity, aligning with future state strategy, enhancing IT services, and developing a 3-year roadmap. Key tasks include carrying out the state's cyber security mandate, completing the cloud migration for all DECAL records and data, which he explained in detail. He said there are growing Department needs as DECAL staff grows to over 650 people and 100 contractors, as the agency has a growing amount of private, stored information as well as multiple data connections with state and external entities. There's also a desire to consolidate or in-source external applications. He also noted the increasing technological complexity within DECAL, including 10 funded programs and 17 mid-to-large applications, heavy usage of desktop virtualization to enable CAPS, 22 virtual servers with approximately 52TB of storage, 48 infrastructure services servers, and multiple databases with single points of hardware failure. He also cited the agency's changing operating environment that includes increasing security threats in terms of sophistication and number, evolving technology platform and service options available, and unpredictable regulatory and policy demands. Expanding on the IT Team's vision, he said the DECAL Digital Transformation journey will pave the way to simplify and secure agency's IT services and provide a path for innovation, new solutions, with the goal of modernizing and securing IT, providing transparency, and improving the quality of services. He listed business objectives to simplify and modernize DECAL IT infrastructure, secure DECAL IT infrastructure, setup DECAL IT for future growth and innovation, and provide transparency and visibility into IT services. He listed aspects of IT's future strategy as securing the cloud; reducing on-premise footprint and closing the on-premises server room; establishing IT processes, procedures, and standards; improving IT services and efficiencies; managing cyber security maturity; improving user experience; and introducing modern technologies to support the IT portfolio. The

services IT provides cover application, enterprise, infrastructure, data center, and network end-users. Some are still on-premise, but many are on the cloud. He then laid out a timeline of the steps and processes and phases that IT has followed since July 2019 to achieve its goals of capability maturity, which he expects to meet by May 2022. He listed the recommendations from the state cyber board that IT is following and stressed two high-priority mandates: all agencies should immediately take steps to install Multi Factor Authentication (MFA), effective July 1, 2019, and as of January 1, 2020, 95% of state employees must have completed the mandatory cybersecurity awareness training for 2019. He described the cyber security training for DECAL staff and provided an update on the cloud migration. Mr. Brice said over the past six months IT has enhanced its leadership, hired critical IT operational members, put a strategy in place to mitigate risk, and put training and mentorship in place. The division has also established provisioning and fulfillment; change management; and ITSM and governance processes. It has also implemented a service catalog and developed many operational technologies and tools to help the agency recover from any attack.

Ms. Harper recessed the meeting at 10:31 a.m. and resumed it at 10:45 a.m.

d. Georgia's Pre-K/ Instructional Supports Update

Deputy Commissioner for Pre-K and Instructional Supports Susan Adams announced that after receiving an initial one-year PDG Planning Grant last year, Georgia was one of 26 states that received a PDG Renewal Grant, in the amount of \$11.2 million over three years. The federal funds will be used to build partnerships to strengthen the state's early childhood care and education system that serves children ages birth through 5. The services encompass programs such as CAPS, Head Start and Early Head Start, Home Visiting, Babies Can't Wait, Preschool Special Education, and Georgia's Pre-K. The grant will focus on vulnerable and underserved populations within the birth-to-5 group, including dual language learners, children with disabilities, children in foster care, children in poverty, children experiencing homelessness, children living in rural areas, and infants and toddlers. The work will involve collaboration with a group of state-level agency partners comprised of the Departments of Education, Public Health, Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Human Services, and the University System of Georgia and Technical Schools and Colleges of Georgia. Ms. Adams explained that the PDG Grant funds will be used to enhance Georgia's early childhood system by strengthening family voice and engagement; helping families to understand child development and connect to early intervention services; connecting families to community services through strengthening partnerships and transitions; building early childhood workforce capacity with teachers, interventionists, and services; increasing access to high-quality child care; and making early childhood data more accessible and useable. In the next steps DECAL will conduct a community needs assessment that will guide development of a strategic plan in collaboration with the Georgia Cross Agency Child Council which sits under the Georgia Children's Cabinet and focuses on the birth-to-5 age group. Ms. Adams also reported on the Family Peer Ambassador Program that was developed as part of the initial PDG Grant to inform and empower families. The Program trains parents to be peer leaders and advocates. To qualify a parent must have a child enrolled currently or during the past two years in one of the state child-centered programs or services that the PDG Grant targets. The 42 family ambassadors come from communities across the state and include foster parents, members of the military, dual language speakers, and fathers. They share resources and information at community events about topics such as early childhood services and child development. They are trained about programs and services, receive resources, and participate in community- and state-level advisory groups and provide feedback to inform policy and practice. They are paid for time and travel connected to their work for the Ambassador Program. Ms. Harper asked if the Ready for K text service is included in the list of resources the Ambassadors receive. Ms. Adams confirmed that the free service parents sign up for that provides activities and information to families that they can do with their children is included. Ms. Harper has sampled the service and recommended it to the Board members. Future plans for the program include recruiting and training a second cohort of Family Ambassadors this spring, creating a state-level Cross Agency Family Council, and piloting a Safe and Secure Family Leadership Institute to build family resilience through a peer training and support system. Ms. Adams recognized Bridget Ratajczak, Child and Family Development Supervisor, and Ann Panzica, Child and Family Training Specialist, who have developed the Family Ambassador Program. In

response to a question Ms. Adams said about 30 of the 42 Ambassadors have participated in over 100 activities and she expects to train a new group of Ambassadors this spring.

e. Quality Innovations & Partnerships Update

Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships Bentley Ponder discussed the preparations for helping all CAPS providers earn a Quality Rated (QR) star rating by December 31, 2020 (CAPS/QR 2020 Goal). He reviewed the history of the Quality Rated System and the CAPS Program and then outlined the rationales, policies, processes, and activities involved in the goal of having all programs providing CAPS receive a Quality Rated star rating by December 31, 2020, in order to continue receiving CAPS funding. He reported that of Georgia's 4,585 eligible providers, 2,076, or 45%, are Quality Rated. He also reported that 70% of children receiving CAPS or Quality Rated Subsidy Grants are in a QR provider. He introduced QR Director Denise Jenson, who explained the temporary and permanent QR operational changes that have been made to facilitate meeting the CAPS/QR 2020 Goal for the 1,200 programs that need initial ratings. The temporary changes allow the 500 providers who are due to have a mandatory re-rating as part of a required reassessment in 2020 to be granted an automatic "hold harmless" year giving them until 2021 to complete it. She reported that 460 programs accepted the offer of the hold harmless year. The 40 others will receive their reassessments this year. Additionally, voluntary reassessment requests affecting an additional 2,000 programs will be suspended in 2020. Only 35 of those programs asked to go forward with their reassessments. As part of the permanent changes, QR transitioned to a Cohort Group sign up system with slots to help providers navigate the QR process and to help QR assessors manage the flow of applications and observations. DECAL also developed two new QR statuses for programs: provisional and probational. She explained the Cohort Group slot-based system that was implemented December 1, 2019. All CAPS providers receiving an initial rating had to register for one of four Cohort Groups by January 31, 2020. CAPS providers who did not self-select a slot by the deadline are being contacted to determine their intent to remain a CAPS provider. Signing up for a cohort group makes CAPS providers eligible for a 2020 Incentive Packages to encourage observations earlier in the year and Ms. Jenson described the incentives which include monetary bonuses for signing up for a Cohort Group and for achieving an initial star rating. She reported that the Cohort Group selection process has been "amazingly successful" and provider friendly, with 1,004 programs already signed up and Groups 1 and 2 completely full. Only 166 slots in Group 3 and 76 in Group 4 are still available. In terms of the QR Provisional and Probationary statuses for newly licensed programs that was recently established, Ms. Jenson said the Provisional Rating Status will allow programs to begin serving families receiving CAPS scholarships immediately, while becoming rated. It will include an online orientation and a pre-rating study to determine eligibility. The start date for the Provisional Rating hasn't been determined. The Probationary Status is optional and immediately available to all programs that do not earn a star rating who want to continue serving families who receive CAPS scholarships while they receive technical assistance and work toward making improvements necessary to earn a rating. QR will adopt a case management approach to these programs, providing quality supports during a 12- to 18-month-long improvement process. Ms. Jenson introduced Shawnell Johnson, CAPS Family Support Director who discussed the range of supports for providers. DECAL created a 2020 Cross Divisional Case Management Committee to facilitate supports for providers. The goals of the committee were to develop recruitment strategies that involve intentional outreach to recruit non-rated CAPS providers; comprehensive supports across DECAL divisions such as licensing compliance and Pre-K guidance; targeted communication to CAPS providers regarding the deadline; and targeted recruitment data collection from the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) to make outreach more effective. The start date of these supports is still under discussion. The committee has successfully supported providers by streamlining a process to allow them to express their concerns about participating in Quality Rated; conducting joint office conferences with CAPS providers to discuss the 2020 deadline; encouraging CAPS providers to select the appropriate cohort slot group; and troubleshooting provider issues that may impact multiple divisions. Ms. Johnson also reported that DECAL developed a multifaceted, ongoing plan for communicating with families that is underway. It includes general communications about the benefits of choosing a Quality Rated provider; distributing information about plans for the 2020 Goal and what families can expect that began in December 2019, messages to all CAPS families that will occur before each major milestone, and reminders about the deadline that are included in all renewal notices sent to families. She added

that targeted communications with families that remain enrolled at an unrated provider after December 31, 2020, will occur 45-60 days prior to their renewal in 2021. She then described the timeline of the family transition to QR providers. After May 1, 2020, families may select only QR providers or those signed up for observations. The deadline for providers to be observed is December 31, 2020. If the family's current provider is not star rated or observed by the deadline, families will move to a QR provider at the next renewal after January 1, 2021. Ms. Johnson said the 2020 Goal will change the Georgia Early Childhood Education landscape. Beyond 2020, QR plans revisions to the portfolio requirements and will continue to support programs in increasing star ratings and achieving continuous quality improvement. Ms. Bennecke asked about the wait list for CAPS. Ms. Johnson explained that there isn't a formal wait list for CAPS because access is based on criteria that set a hierarchy of priority groups among those seeking CAPS assistance and help to ensure that services reach those with the greatest needs first. There are also income requirements that must be met by applicants and approved educational and work activity requirements that determine eligibility. The CAPS Program's current capacity is 50,000 children. Commissioner Jacobs explained that the capacity represents 14% of those eligible, and DECAL realizes there is a greater need. She added that because CAPS operates based on priority funding DECAL believes a wait list isn't necessary and would require the program to cut off access to new applicants. So, by determining eligibility based on the hierarchy of set priorities, rather than time of sign-up, CAPS ensures that it is serving those with the greatest needs.

f. Child Care Services Update

Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services (CCS) Pam Stevens explained that the division is requesting Board approval to revise rules to ensure that child care providers' food service and supervision practices meet safety standards set forth in Caring for Our Children, the National Health and Safety Performance Standards and Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs. They represent the best evidence, expertise, and experience in the country on quality health and safety practices and policies, incorporating guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American Public Health Association (APHA), and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education (NRC). The revisions will also update requirements regarding feeding of children to prevent choking, and update the definition of supervision to provide more comprehensive information. CCS is also requesting permission to add a new rule for annual license fees. The proposed changes to section 591-1-1-.15 Food Service and Nutrition to prevent choking are: Food size: Infants solid foods cut ¼ inch or smaller; Toddlers cut ½ inch or smaller; Staff ensure that children: do not put excessive amounts of food in their mouths; chew food appropriately; are seated while eating; are not laid down or put to sleep with food in their mouths; manufacturer's instructions and recommendations are followed; children less than four years old are not served foods associated with choking (any food similar in shape and size to a child's trachea/windpipe, such as, peanuts, hot dogs, raw carrots, popcorn, fish with bones, cheese cubes, and grapes), and that food must not be served until it is prepared appropriately for each child's age, and individual eating, chewing, and swallowing ability. The proposed changes to 591-1-1-.32 Staff Child Ratios and Supervision state that supervision must: be appropriate to individual age, needs, and capabilities of each child, including indoor and outdoor activities, meal times, nap time, transportation, field trips, and transitions between activities. Staff must: be positioned to maximize their ability to hear, see, and respond promptly to children's needs and actions; and be seated an arm's length from children; attentive; and participating with children during meal times. If the Board authorizes CCS to move forward with the revisions, the division will conduct Public Comment period and hold webinars during July 2020. The Board would then vote on the proposed rule changes at the August 27, 2020 meeting. If the Board approves them, the changes become effective October 1, 2020.

Following the CCS presentation, Ms. Harper asked for a motion to authorize CCS to rewrite the rules as outlined and to conduct Public Comment Period, and consider and respond to any comments received. The Board will be notified of any issues raised with the revisions and will consider and resolve them before voting on final adoption. Ms. Purcell moved to authorize the revisions and Ms. Morrissey seconded it. The Board voted unanimously to authorize CCS to revise the rules.

7. Lunch and Committee Meetings

Ms. Harper adjourned the meeting for lunch and committee meetings at 11:50 a.m., and called the meeting back to order at 1 p.m.

8. Public Comment Period Opens

When the meeting reconvened, Ms. Harper opened the Public Comment period and invited speakers to sign-in. No one came forward.

9. Committee Reports

The Board meeting resumed with committee chairs delivering their reports.

a. Programs & Rules

Ms. Howell reported that the Program and Rules Committee received updates from CAPS on the successful family-centered coaching program in collaboration with the Technical Colleges of Georgia. The Dept of Human Services has recently joined the program and an agency partner. CCS shared information on a new provider technical assistance services pilot program, as well as changes being considered to licensing reports to make them parent-friendly and useful. The Committee also heard reports on the opening of the Pre-K application and curriculum review processes. The Pre-K Program received 768 continuation applications, 115 expansion applications, and 159 new applications. DECAL also received 26 requests for curriculum reviews to match them to GELDS, professional development, and developmentally appropriate practices guidelines.

b. Budget & Finance

Ms. Purcell said the Finance Committee took a deeper dive into the second quarter budget report. The group commended DECAL on keeping operating expenses in the 9%-10% range and for never having findings of deficiencies from financial audits.

c. Quality Innovations and Partnerships

Mr. Davis reported that the Quality Innovations and Partnerships Committee received general updates on the community outreach and partnerships, QR, Research, and Early Head Start Community Partnership activities, including more details on the CAPS/QR 2020 Goal progress and system revisions to improve the process, the pilot phase of the Language and Literacy Endorsement Pilot, and a pilot to increase the efficiency of the QR observations conducted at family child care learning homes (FCCLH). The Commissioner added that the incentives provided as part of the FCCLH pilot were funded through the Foundation for Early Care and Learning. The Committee also heard reports about community partnership activities throughout the six DECAL regions and the Research Team's plans to hold a CCDF Research Grant Summit to showcase its findings and progress.

10. Public Comment Period Closes

Following the committee reports, Ms. Harper asked for additional comments. When no one offered any she closed the Public Comment Period.

11. Adjournment

Ms. Harper announced that the next Board meeting will be held on May 21, 2020. She adjourned the meeting at 1:23 p.m.

Susan H Harper 5/14/2020 Kathy B. Howell 5/14/2020

Board Chair, Signature

Date

Board Secretary, Signature

Date