

# Decidedly DECAL

*Highlighting the Events That Shape Who We Are*



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## DECAL By the Numbers

- 821** - Lead Pre-K teachers trained in new Lead Teacher Institute
- 125** - Counties now served by Quality Rated
- 3.5 million** - Meals served last summer through the 2012 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- 375,000** - Georgia children attending a child care program
- 84,000** - Georgia children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program this year



## Meet

## Commissioner's Corner

*by Commissioner Bobby Cagle*



Last month while watching the American Music Awards, I was struck by something Usher said while accepting his well-deserved trophy for Favorite Male Artist in Soul/R&B. As he graciously accepted the award Usher made this statement: "Teamwork makes the dream work."

If anyone is blessed with amazing talent, it's Usher and he had every right to claim all the glory for himself. But he didn't. He took time to consider his band, dancers, record producers and fans in their respective roles that led him to this moment in the national spotlight. It took teamwork to make his dream work.

As I consider the stellar performance of our agency over the past year, I find myself with the same thoughts. It takes all of us to raise awareness of Georgia's youngest learners and answer the clarion call for protecting their health and safety and providing them with quality early education. A commissioner, assistant commissioner or management team could never do this work alone. Those who think they can are only fooling themselves.

As an agency, 2012 was quite a year. We launched Quality Rated, not only meeting but greatly exceeding our goal for the number of child care centers that would voluntarily enroll. We celebrated the first half of our 20th anniversary year for Georgia's Pre-K Program with an outstanding Pre-K Week where the Governor, First Lady and over 128 elected officials

## Keith Bostick

*In last month's Decidedly DECAL newsletter, we reported that Kay Hellwig is retiring as assistant commissioner for child care services and that Keith Bostick has been named her successor. Learn more about Keith by reading our interview below.*



### **What attracted you to this position at DECAL?**

I've been in the child welfare arena for the past 30 years focusing on improving the lives of children, families and communities in which they live. I'm a firm believer that the health of all three areas directly influences future experiences and outcomes. Joining DECAL provides me an opportunity to continue this sojourn toward ensuring healthy and positive outcomes for Georgia's citizens. Anytime I think about or interact with children and families and/or the systems and services that support them, I'm led by my internal charge of "We must get it right and we must get it right early!"

### **How will your past professional experience help you in this new role?**

My 30+ year professional background in the private, public and governmental arena is filled with practice and leadership experiences that align well with the vision and mission of DECAL. My previous clinical, regulatory, education, healthcare, community and administrative roles provide me with an array of knowledge and skill sets that should enhance the established great work of the DECAL programs.

### **What would you want employees to know about you?**

I'm one who strives for balance in all areas of my life. This effort to gain balance keeps me fueled, motivated and determined about the achievement of successful outcomes, even in the midst of challenges, struggles and/or adversity. I like to motivate and develop staff to not only meet but to exceed their professional and personal goals. I'm strong on team approach and team building. I learned long ago that a smart person is not one who knows all the answers; a smart person is one who knows where to get the answers.

### **What would you list as your favorite personal accomplishments?**

Continuing to raise and parent my daughters Kirbe, 15, and Kelli, 11, after the loss of their mother to breast cancer in March 2012.

visited classrooms around the state. Our Child Care Services team navigated through some challenging waters as they inspected and regulated more than 6,300 child care centers across the state. And as an agency, we faced an unprecedented investigative series by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, emerging even better than before, in my opinion. As they say, what doesn't kill us makes us stronger.

Through our employee survey, I heard your requests for more information, communication and interaction with me. That's why we launched this e-newsletter Decidedly DECAL, initiated Chats with the Commissioner and will hold our first All Employee Meeting in a long time on Thursday, December 6, 2012, here in Atlanta. In these meetings, I always stress three questions: What are we doing right? Where can we improve? If you were commissioner, what would be your top priority? Feel free to respond to those questions anytime at [bobby.cagle@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:bobby.cagle@dec.al.ga.gov).

In the coming year, I will continue to emphasize the health and safety of children, improved communications among all of us and customer service best described in five simple words: How can I serve you?

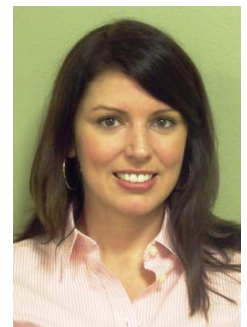
I look forward to seeing all of you at the All Employee Meeting this week and in Chats with the Commissioner next year. When you receive an invitation for one of these meetings...and you will...please make it a priority to come and participate.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season with your family and friends and for a very happy 2013. Remember, teamwork to make the dream work! I have it on good authority from Usher.

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## **Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) Rollout: What to Expect**

A new set of standards is on the horizon. With any new initiative, the process can be both exciting and overwhelming. Our goal is to roll out the new Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) in helpful phases that will ensure all teachers have the knowledge necessary to be successful.



Laura Evans

### **How will you use this transition time?**

My efforts are to be a quick study of positive work rendered by Kay Hellwig and the CCS staff. Kay has done an outstanding job leading CCS and DECAL's charge to keep children safe and their early care settings safer. I will also work toward absorbing current and future points of action with all the other program areas and staff. Having read the latest strategic plan, I will also spend time with leaders, staff and the community assessing our pace and actions at plan attainment.

### **What are your hobbies? Favorite TV shows? Favorite music?**

I'm a "Golfaholic," whose goal is to play the Top 100 Golf Courses in America (I'm 1/3 of the way there -- even played St. Andrews in Scotland). I also coach youth soccer and basketball. Favorite TV show is "The Wire." Favorite Music is "Smooth Jazz."

## **In Case You Missed It**

### **Newsletters Posted on Website**

If you missed a previous issue of Decidedly DECAL, you can catch up on all the employee news by visiting the DECAL website. Past issues are posted there for your convenience. [Take a look.](#)

**Online Library Learning Initiative (OLLI) has launched.** OLLI, a virtual warehouse of online learning modules and video podcasts designed specifically for the early learning community teaching children from birth to age five, became available at the end of November.

This resource allows anyone with Internet access to share in the latest materials for classroom use and professional development.

Materials for Georgia's Pre-K Program and Child Care Services (CCS) Core Licensing Rules are included on the site.

To access OLLI, go to [http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001uBZfwJBTr8YnNxFMg-QLF0QvX4-RyDLqC0r1AkOW4GSk8de\\_rZXQz1Vji\\_lj1efYePsZh-LuD8YqRtI11bfmONtAJZWq-Lsn7y8wsX4AVHj0foI5s\\_24A](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001uBZfwJBTr8YnNxFMg-QLF0QvX4-RyDLqC0r1AkOW4GSk8de_rZXQz1Vji_lj1efYePsZh-LuD8YqRtI11bfmONtAJZWq-Lsn7y8wsX4AVHj0foI5s_24A). All of the services available through OLLI are offered free of charge.

Phase one of our GELDS rollout process will be the awareness and information phase. We will start with the launch of a new website in February. This new site will contain a wealth of information about the new standards and how they will affect our teachers. There will also be an area on the website where visitors can provide feedback on the new GELDS. Be on the lookout for the website address in next month's newsletter. We look forward to hearing your thoughts as you take a first look at the GELDS.

Also during our information and awareness phase, we will air a series of webinars that will have important information about the GELDS. Some of these webinars will be live, during which participants can interact with the presenters, and other webinars will be available via links on the new website. The first few webinars will have general orientation content; the others will be more content-specific webinars. These will begin airing in April. More information on the webinars will be available in the coming months.

The second phase of our GELDS rollout will be the training and professional development phase. We want all teachers equipped with the knowledge they need to be comfortable in implementing the new GELDS. Training will include an introduction to the domains, strands, standards, and indicators, and it will also offer help with planning lessons and appropriate activities around the GELDS. Training and professional development will begin in May and continue throughout the next year.

The last phase of the GELDS rollout process will be the gradual implementation phase. Teachers will start using the GELDS next school year (2013-2014) with continuous training, professional development, and support. Full implementation, with measurements in place, will not go into effect until the following school year (2014-2015).

You can find more information by visiting the Content Standards section of our DECAL website under the Pre-K tab or by contacting our Standards Coordinator, Laura Evans, at <mailto:laura.evans@dec.al.ga.gov> or (404) 478-4486

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## **New Chairman Elected for Board of Early Care and Learning**

At its November meeting, the Board of Early Care and Learning accepted the resignation of Dr. Carolyn Ormsby as Board Chair. Dr. Ormsby said this was a





**Board of Early Care and Learning Commends Voices for Georgia's Children.** Voices for Georgia's Children Executive Director Pat Willis (second from right) accepts a commendation from the Board of Early Care and Learning recognizing another successful Georgia's Pre-K Week. Shown (L-R) are DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle, former DECAL Board Chair Dr. Carolyn Ormsby, Willis, and new DECAL Board Chair Victor Morgan. This year's Georgia's Pre-K Week saw 128 legislators and 11 other state leaders, including Governor Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal, visiting Pre-K classrooms across the state.

## Quick Links

[DECAL on Facebook](#)  
[DECAL on Twitter](#)  
[DECAL Website](#)



## December Birthdays



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

- 3 - Lacey Lanier Lewis
- 8 - Gloria Jean Washington
- 9 - Meghan K. McNail
- 10 - Delia N. Newell
- 14 - Laurianne I. McDonald
- 15 - Tamara Denise Hall
- 15 - Shamonica M. Reese
- 16 - Judy T. LaRue
- 16 - Angela V. Melton
- 17 - Carole Michele Allen
- 19 - Teresa M. Churchwell
- 19 - Suzanne D. Milford
- 20 - Sonja R. Adams
- 30 - Tahishe L. Smith

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

difficult decision but her husband recently sold his business and joined her in retirement, providing them with more time for traveling and spending time with their grandchildren. A retired principal of Honey Creek Elementary School in Rockdale County, Dr. Ormsby was an excellent board chair and will be missed.

In response to the resignation, the Board elected Victor Morgan of Cartersville as the new chairman. A retired director of student support services with the Bartow County Schools, Morgan is president and CEO of The Morgan Consulting Group, Inc. He represents the Eleventh Congressional District.

Susan Harper of Albany was elected secretary, succeeding Morgan in that role. Dr. Luann Purcell of Warner Robins continues in her role as vice chair. The Board of Early Care and Learning is a volunteer advisory board to Commissioner Bobby Cagle and DECAL. Its members are appointed by Governor Nathan Deal.



Dr. Carolyn Ormsby passes the gavel to new Early Care and Learning Board Chair Victor Morgan

## Spotlight on... DECAL Finance Unit

This month's Employee Spotlight focuses on the DECAL Finance Team, led by Financial Services Director Margie Landers. Last month, DECAL received the 2012 audit report indicating no findings or

## Board of Early Care and Learning

Vacant  
First Congressional District

Susan Harper, Albany  
Second Congressional District  
(Secretary)

Kathy Howell, Carrollton  
Third Congressional District

Vacant  
Fourth Congressional District

Carlene Talton, Decatur  
Fifth Congressional District

Dawn Henderson, Marietta  
Sixth Congressional District

Phil Davis, Stone Mountain  
Seventh Congressional District

Luann Purcell, Ed.D.,  
Warner Robins  
Eighth Congressional District  
(Vice Chair)

Vacant  
Ninth Congressional District

Janice Gallimore, Greensboro  
Tenth Congressional District

Victor Morgan, Cartersville  
Eleventh Congressional District (Chair)

Kay A. Ford, Savannah  
Twelfth Congressional District

Maggy Martinez, Hampton,  
Thirteenth Congressional District

### The Faces of DECAL

*DECAL faces featured in the banner of this issue are (L-R) Darlene Sims, Michele Rauton, Brian Griffin, Tamara Denise Hall, Rachel W. Fowler, Bridgette Washington, and Randy Hudgins.*

*We are committed to nurturing Georgia's youngest children, keeping them safe and healthy, and enriching their lives.*

questioned costs related to financial statements and no findings or questioned costs related to federal awards. This makes 10 straight clean audits for DECAL.

"I thank and commend Margie Landers, her management team, and the entire Finance Unit for a job well done," said Ray Higgins, DECAL Chief Financial Officer. "The accomplishment of 10 consecutive years is truly remarkable and illustrates a decade of sound financial management. Providing a solid financial foundation is absolutely critical to our ability to perform as an agency."

The Finance Unit was honored last month with a commendation from the Board of Early Care and Learning for "10 consecutive years of outstanding audits with no audit findings, questioned costs, or material concerns from the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts."



Shown in photo are (L-R) Grants and Travel Accountant Stanley Cooper; Budget Officer and Pre-K Accountant Glenda Hambrick; Purchasing Manager Kay McCorkle; Accounts Payable Accountant Lisa Tolbert; Accounts Receivable and Federal Reporting Accountant Angelita Ramanou; Pre-K Accountant Shannen Grimes; Payroll and HR Accountant Rhonda Gunn; Finance Director Margie Landers; Accounting Manager Sharon McPherson; and CFO Ray Higgins. Looking on are DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle and former Board Chair Dr. Carolyn Ormsby. Not pictured are Accounts Receivable and Nutrition Accountant Aneshia Harris and Special Projects Accountant Bart Ellington.

## Sponsors Needed to Serve Meals to Children Next Summer

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is looking for eligible sponsors to serve

nutritious meals to children throughout Georgia next summer. The SFSP, administered by DECAL is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).



**Lou Brienza**

Lou Brienza, DECAL Nutrition Services Director, said the SFSP provides reimbursement to nonprofit and government organizations that provide free meals to eligible children especially in low-income areas during the summer months when students are out of school where they would normally receive breakfast and/or lunch.

Brienza said the following entities can qualify as sponsors: public or private nonprofit schools; universities, colleges, or camps; units of local government; private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based organizations considered tax exempt by the IRS. "Sponsors can operate the program and feed children at sites such as schools, churches, recreation centers, community and migrant centers, and other local community areas where children congregate and play," he said. Sponsors are reimbursed according to federal guidelines for the meals they serve. They can prepare and serve meals themselves, receive bulk items from a vendor or contract with a food service management company to prepare meals for the program.

If you know of an organization that may be interested in being a sponsor, please direct them to DECAL's website or have them contact the SFSP team at Bright from the Start toll free at 1-855-550-SFSP (7377) or via e-mail, [SFSP@decalfga.gov](mailto:SFSP@decalfga.gov).

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## **License Fees Due for Georgia's Child Care Programs**

December is the time that annual license fees are due from Georgia's approximately 6,300 child care learning centers, group day care homes and family day care homes. Fees are based on the number of children in the facility but the maximum amount is \$250 for larger child care learning centers.



**Kay Hellwig**

The official due date is December 1, 2012; however, state law provides for a 30-day "grace period" in which providers can pay their license fees without penalty through December 31,

2012. Payments received on or after January 1, 2013 will include a late fee of half the provider's annual license fee. License revocations begin February 1, 2013 for providers that have not paid license fees by that time.

Under Georgia law (O.C.G.A. Section 50-36-1), anyone applying for a public benefit is now required to verify their lawful presence in the United States with secure and verifiable documents. This can include a U.S. passport, driver's license or other photo identification. A DECAL license or registration is a public benefit issued to the owner of a child care facility each year. Therefore, the owner must submit the required secure and verifiable documents before the annual license will be issued.

As of late November, 23% of child care programs had paid their annual license fees and 43% had returned affidavits showing verification of lawful presence.

Some state agencies have reported delays as a result of the new requirement; however, Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services Kay Hellwig says the process is going well for DECAL. "We have moved personnel around to help with the demand and don't foresee any delays," she explained. "Our consultants and office staff have done an excellent job of making providers aware of the new requirement and that has helped tremendously."

[Read more](#)

