

Lanier Technical College  
November 19, 2024

Meeting Minutes

**NOTE: Council presentations and handouts can be [downloaded](#).**

Chairman Scott Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Dr. Cayanna Good, Assist Commissioner, Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Adult Education, welcomed and thanked Council members for choosing Lanier Technical College for the November meeting.

Tim McDonald, President, Lanier Technical College, welcomed Council members and guests and provided information about the importance of literacy skills to individuals' personal financial stability and the state's workforce.

Special guest, Governor Nathan Deal, attended the meeting and discussed the importance of the Council's work. Governor Deal emphasized that literacy is a fundamental cornerstone for both individual and societal progress in Georgia and urged the Council to make teaching children to read a top priority in our state.

Governor Deal also spoke about his late wife, Mrs. Sandra Deal, and her legacy in promoting early childhood literacy. He described a portrait that was commissioned of her reading to a diverse group of children which is in the lobby of the new Sandra Dunagan Deal Elementary School in Hall County. He said that his wife inspired him to write his new children's book, *Veto, The Governor's Cat*.

Chairman Johnson welcomed Council members and guests.

Sarah Richards, Georgia's Literacy Coach, provided an overview of the Council structure with working groups providing recommendations to the Council, which is a part of the meeting agenda.

Richard Smith, Executive Director, First District RESA, provided an update on the comprehensive, statewide regional literacy coaching initiative, "Let's Read, Georgia," led by the Georgia RESAs. Three Let's Read, Georgia coaches also spoke during the meeting.

Amy Denty, Council member and Georgia Department of Education's Director of Literacy, gave an update on GaDOE's literacy coaches and how they have placed 60 coaches in the lowest performing schools. The coaches work directly with teachers and school leaders to improve reading and writing skills.

Sarah Richards provided an overview of the State's Literacy Plan and outlined specific goals, objectives, and actions to achieve these goals. Richards emphasized the plan is a collaborative, living, document that will continue to be refined by the Council.

Dr. Lindee Morgan, Executive Director, Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy, provided an update on the process to select universal reading screeners, as required by SB 464.

Dr. Dana Nichols, Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs for the University System of Georgia, presented an overview of new teacher instruction in the science of reading, that is required by HB 538. She provided

information on the process to review each USG College of Education's plan for instruction. The Professional Standards Commission is also reviewing the process.

### **Council Recommendations**

Amy Denty and Dr. Jennifer Lindstrom, Statewide Dyslexia Coordinator for the Georgia Department of Education, shared recommendations from the Kindergarten through Third Grade Working Group for combining provisions of SB 48 (dyslexia) and HB 538 (early literacy) to refine various processes. This is a recommendation for the 2025 legislative session.

Dr. Garry McGiboney, Executive Director for Sharecare, and Ellen Wiley, Council member and Board of Trustees, Atlanta Speech School, provided recommendations for the kindergarten through third-grade hearing and vision screening subgroup.

Dr. Gary Bingham, Executive Director, Urban Child Study Center, Georgia State University, provided information about the importance of high-quality childcare in the early years. He provided Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) funding recommendations for the Birth – 5 Year Working Group.

Julie Walker, Vice Chancellor for Libraries and Archives, State Librarian Georgia Public Library Service, and Evan Michael Bush, Youth Services Director, Georgia Public Library Service, presented their recommendations for funding on behalf of the Community Working Group.

### **Public Comment**

Lisa Liedke, from Wellstar, made brief comments about their commitment to literacy and the steps they are taking with patients.

Chairman Johnson provided closing comments and thanked Council members and the working groups for their hard work and dedication to literacy. The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.