

Georgia Council on Literacy Meeting
August 7, 2023

Minutes of Meeting

I. Welcome

Kyle Marrero, President, Georgia Southern University

President Marrero opened the meeting at 10:00 with a greeting and insight into what Georgia Southern is doing for education and literacy improvements.

II. Vision and Overview of the Council

Scott Johnson, Chair, Georgia Council on Literacy

Johnson introduced Representative Bethany Ballard and thanked her for HB 538. Representative Ballard gave a short speech on the bill's importance.

Johnson discussed SB 211 and HB 538:

- Stated that the literacy rates in Georgia cannot support the growing workforce.
- Starting literacy at the elementary level, as well as catching up adults to a proficient level of reading.
- Discussed the importance of understanding HB 538 because it specifies exactly what the science of reading means for Georgia.

III. Science of Reading Overview and Discussion

Dr. Ryan Lee-James, Rollins Center for Language and Literacy

Dr. Lee-James discussed the third trimester of pregnancy, the development of the baby's auditory channel, and the early neural connection that will form the foundation for the child's ability to learn to read and write proficiently.

She also discussed data surrounding literacy:

- Disproportionate intervention practices for children, in general, and special education students
- Students who are not reading proficiently in fourth grade will struggle with reading later in life.
- 8th and 12th grade literacy rates rarely change because literacy is not specifically addressed past third grade.
- There are flawed and disproven theories as the basis for programs and materials being used in schools.

She also discussed the differences in the science of reading and the whole language approach.

IV. HB 538, Timeline and Agency Reporting

Amy Denty, Director of Literacy, GA Department of Education

Denty discussed the five components and timelines associated with HB 538:

- High quality instructional materials
- Universal screeners
- Targeted interventions
- Professional learning
- Teacher preparation

V. Highlights of School System Success and Community Partnerships and Other Messages

Charles Wilson, Superintendent, Bulloch County Schools

Paul Brooksher, Superintendent, Bryan County Schools

Wilson shared how Bulloch County Schools took an intentional approach focusing on the birth through age five group.

Brooksher spoke on the importance of quality teachers and improving the K-12 school system.

a. Working groups

Request that each Council member let Miranda know which working group best fits their interest.

a. Administrative items

GOSA staff discussed travel reimbursements and the need for Council member's biographical information for the website.

VI. Report from the Georgia Literacy Coach

Miranda Williams, Georgia Literacy Coach, Georgia Council on Literacy

Williams provided an update on the council's recent and future work, including creating of "working groups."

She shared upcoming council meeting dates:

- i. October 17, Kennesaw State University, 10 a.m.
- ii. November 15, virtual meeting, 10 a.m.
- iii. No December meeting

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.

