

**MINUTES OF THE
GEORGIA DRIVER’S EDUCATION COMMISSION MEETING**

September 27, 2018, 1:30 pm
Tiny Towne, 2055 Beaver Ruin Road, Norcross, Georgia 30071

Chairman Harris Blackwood called the September 27, 2018, Georgia Driver’s Education Commission meeting to order at 1:31pm. Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were as follows:

| Board Members in Attendance | Board Members not in Attendance |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Mr. Harris Blackwood, Chairman | |
| Mr. Spencer Moore, Vice Chairman | |
| Mr. Alfred Barber (by phone) | |
| Ms. Lidell Greenway | |
| Dr. Malika Reed Wilkins (by phone) | |
| Mr. Kevin Boyd | |
| Ms. Beth Graham (by phone) | |

Non-Members in Attendance were as follows:

Mr. Josh Turner, Georgia Driver’s Education Commission
Mr. Jimmy Sumner, Georgia Driver’s Education Commission
Ms. Kisha Bell, Georgia Driver’s Education Commission
Ms. Amy Radley, Attorney General’s Office
Ms. Juenesse Holman, Georgia Department of Driver’s Services
Mr. Toni Abasi Hill, Malcom Omari Hill Scholarship Fund, Inc.
Mr. Pierre Maloof, Tiny Towne

Approval of September 27, 2018 Agenda

Chairman Blackwood presented the agenda. Vice Chairman Moore made a motion to adopt the agenda, as proposed. Mr. Kevin Boyd seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of June 26, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Blackwood presented the meeting minutes from June 26, 2018 meeting. Ms. Beth Graham made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, as presented. Mr. Kevin Boyd seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with no discussion.

Staff Report

Mr. Turner presented the July Scholarship Report. 830 applicants applied during the July 2019 application period. 440 of the applicants were placed in tier 2, which meets the needs based eligibility. 390 of the applicants were in tier 3. 350 applicants were awarded scholarships and all were in tier 2. 90 applicants from tier 2 and 390 from tier 3, a total of 480 applicants were denied. There were no applicants for tier 1.

Vice Chairman Moore asked Mr. Turner to explain the Tier levels. Mr. Turner explained that tier 1 is awarded to applicants who are a child or dependent of a public safety professionals killed in the line of duty and members of the United States military killed in action. Tier 2 is awarded to applicants based on financial need eligibility. Tier 3 is awarded to applicants who do not meet the criteria set forth in the first and second priority outlined above.

In August, there were a total of 725 applications submitted. 385 applications was in tier 2 and 340 was in tier 3. 350 applicants were awarded scholarships and all were in tier 2. 35 applicants in tier 2 and the remaining 340 applicants in tier 3, a total of 375, were denied.

In September, there were a total of 746 applications submitted. 1 application was in tier 1, 413 were in tier 2, and 332 were in tier 3. 1 applicant from tier 1 and 349 applicants from tier 2, were awarded scholarships. 64 applicants in tier 2 and all 332 applicants in tier 3, a total of 396 applicants, were denied.

Mr. Turner stated in the month of July August and September reports shows the number of total applicants has dropped significantly prior to this quarter. In the late of fiscal year 2018, GDEC received an average of 1,100 to 1,200 applications per month. The average number of applicants in the first quarter of fiscal year 2019 is approximately 750. Mr. Turner predicted that the reduction in the number of applicants is due to the limited number of applications being awarded and providers' reluctances to encourage students to apply based on the high number of students denied scholarships monthly. Vice Chairman Moore asked where a person beyond the providers can learn about this opportunity. Mr. Turner stated that the Commission does not advertise the program beyond placing brochures with high school guidance counselors and driver training providers due to the limited number of scholarships that are awarded.

Mr. Turner presented the provider scholarship redemption report. It showed the number of scholarships each provider has redeemed from the period of March 28th through June 25th, 2018.

From the fourth quarter customer service report GDEC staff responded to 2,517 provider inquiries, 2,222 parent and student email inquiries, 724 voicemail messages, and approved 291 invoices.

Mr. Barber asked Mr. Turner to confirm if there was enough funding to approve all tier 2 applicants. Mr. Turner stated that we are getting close its less than a hundred each in the last three months.

Dr. Wilkins asked Mr. Turner to explain the reasons applicants were denied scholarships. Mr. Turner explained that limited funding prevented scholarships from being awarded and explained that on average 350 scholarships are approved each month. Mr. Turner offered further explanation if needed.

There were no further questions.

Adoption of Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report

Mr. Turner presented the Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report to the Commission briefly highlighting each section and explained that the report will be submitted to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House and Committee Chairs in the House and Senate responsible for Transportation, Motor Vehicles, and Public Safety. Mr. Turner brought the Commission's attention to the declining funding over the past three years in the funding history chart and the number of scholarships awarded in fiscal year 2018.

Mr. Barber asked if any funding carried forward from 2018 to fiscal year 2019. Mr. Turner stated the program does not carry any funding over, however; once the scholarship is awarded, a purchase order is issued to reserve the funds until the scholarship is completed.

Vice Chairman Moore inquired about the difference in the amount of funding appropriated and the value of scholarships awarded and asked if an explanation could be added to the report. Chairman Blackwood explained the difference as being in administrative funds and other programs not related to the grant scholarship program.

Ms. Lidell Greenway made a motion to adopt the Fiscal Year 2019 with an explanation added regarding the other programs funded by the Commission. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Moore. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Chairman Blackwood opened the floor for other business.

Public Comment

Chairman Blackwood recognized Mr. Toni Abasi Hill for public comment. Mr. Hill represents the Malcolm Omari Hill Scholarship Fund, Inc. The organization is in memory of his son who was killed on October 16, 2010 in a motor vehicle crash. They offer classes across Georgia on safe driving. Mr. Hill urged the Commission to market the scholarship program because he feels that the word about the program is not being communicated across the state.

Adjournment

Chairman Blackwood asked if there were any other comments. Hearing none, the chair called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Alfred Barber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Blackwood announced that the FY 2019 Second Quarter Meeting would be held on December 20, 2018 at the Governor's Office of Highway Safety. The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m. and announced that a tour of Tiny Towne will be offered to any interested parties by Mr. Pierre Maloof.

Respectfully submitted,
Kischa Bell
Executive Assistant
Georgia Driver's Education Commission