

**Alpha Kappa Chapter
The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International
Meeting at Early Learning Coalition Center
February 25, 2020
Submitted by Rhonda Work**

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Nancy Watson at 5:40 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Deborah Hannah, Monica Hayes, Delores Hudson, Nancy Rosenbaum, Susan Vinson, Nancy Watson, and Rhonda Work

Minutes: Delores Hudson moved and Nancy Rosenbaum seconded that the minutes of the December 12, 2019 meeting be approved as published.

Treasurer's Report: There was no written treasurer's report, but Rhonda Work reported the chapter is in sound financial shape.

Old Business: Nancy Watson reported on the District I meeting held in Marianna on January 25th. She stated that the sessions were very informative and the fellowship delightful as usual. More information and pictures can be found in the newsletter.

New Business: Lundquist House members have requested that we have another dinner with them before the end of spring semester. Following discussion, it was decided that Nancy Watson would contact the girls and see if any Monday in March (except the first one) would be available for the dinner. Once a date is determined, she will contact our members

Our April 25th meeting will be at Janie Register's home. A hostess is needed to assist Janie with arrangements. Please contact Nancy Watson if you are willing to serve as a hostess.

Program: Monica Hayes announced that we had 337+ books to donate to the Early Learning Coalition (ELC). Many thanks to all who contributed to the effort. She then introduced Morgan Evers, Community Relations Director for the ELC, who gave a wonderful and detailed account of the programs and services offered by the ELC. Seven counties are served by ELC: Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, and Wakulla. The mission of the Center is to ensure that every child is ready for school and although the emphasis is on 0-5, the Center serves up through grade 12. ELC collaborates with other state agencies, private providers, businesses, and churches to find and serve families in need. All providers must meet a rigorous set of criteria before approval for providing services. An ELC team goes out daily to the various communities to review programs and provide needed assistance. ELC can assist in providing wrap around child care services so that parents can work or attend school. The focus is on working families or those where parents are going to school and families in homeless shelters. Many "families" are headed by grandparents and great grandparents, even aunts and uncles. No matter the family structure, each is encouraged to improve its situation and seek better jobs, etc.

Funding comes from several sources including the legislature and the Department of Children and Families and federal grants. Referrals from DCF are a priority. The most recent funding totaled \$25 million. ELC served 8,000 children last year.

ELC works with Head Start programs, many of which also offer Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK). For pre-k children who may have special needs, the Special Instructional Services (SIS) program has been established. This consists of screenings to determine needs and provision of psychological and therapeutic services outside the classroom. The Childhood Resource and Referral program offers hotline and email access to ELC as well as onsite services. The parents can fill out a form indicating what services they want for their child and ELC provides them with a list of resources in the community to match their request. Vision and hearing screenings are available to the service providers with whom ELC contracts.

The book program is one of the most successful programs found at ELC. As books come in they are sorted and made ready for display at the Center, for distribution to the seven counties, or for the Book and Stroll program. This program is designed to set up stations at various parks in the counties and encourage parents to come by, choose a book, and read it to their children in the park. The Reading Center at ELC is designed for 0-5 years of age. When families come into the Center, the child may choose a book to take home. No matter how many children are in the family, each child may have a book each time they visit the facility.

Following the presentation, Morgan Evers took us on a tour of the facilities which are spacious and attractively appointed. There are several meeting rooms available for rental at no cost. One highlight was the Teacher Resource Room where teachers in the schools have access to laminating, dry board cutting, construction and bulletin board paper among other services.

This was one of the best programs Alpha Kappa has ever had. We just wish more of you could have been with us.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.