
Board of Early Care and Learning

Board of Early Care and Learning Meeting
Thursday, May 19, 2022 — 9:00 a.m.
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE – East Tower
Oak Conference Room and via GoToMeeting
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Amy M. Jacobs, Commissioner

Meeting Minutes

Board Members

Kristy Beam, Jen Bennecke, Debra Brock (Vice Chair), Phil Davis (Chair), Susan Harper, Joanna Hill, Kristin Morrissey, Luann Purcell, Cristina Washell, Karla Zisook

Public Guests

Rachel Combs, Finch Floyd, Hannah Goldberg, Lisa Hardt, Beverly Johnson, Ed Juline, Michelle Lank, Shelly Lawson, Blake Miller, Ellaine Miller, Joe Perreault, Maggie Reeves, Kristie Terry, Austin Trott, Brigitte Willis, Jessica Woltjen

DECAL Staff

Amy Jacobs, Commissioner
Susan Adams, Deputy Commissioner for Pre-K and Instructional Supports
Dennis Brice, Chief Information Officer
Reg Griffin, Chief Communications Officer
Elisabetta Kasfir, Deputy Commissioner for Federal Programs
Bentley Ponder, Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships
Rian Ringsrud, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration
Pam Stevens, Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services
Ira Sudman, Chief Legal Officer
Carrie Ashbee, Executive Director, DECAL Foundation
Farouk Baksh, Senior Director, Information Technology
Lari Lyn Beyer, Quality Rated Regional Assessor Manager
Chondra Bolton, CACDS Coordinator
Tamika Boone, Nutrition Services Director
Kimberly Brickey, Quality Rated Assessor
Jennifer Bridgeman, CCS Quality and Process Improvement Manager
Vanessa Brown, EHS Partnership, Education Program Specialist
Erin Darley, Quality Rated Assessor
Glenda Davis-Canteen, Early Education Community Partnerships Coordinator NW
Faith Duncan, Pre-K Field Operations Director
Rebecca Ellis, Practice and Support Services Director, Instructional Supports
Megan Fickes, Director, Early Head Start Partnership
Mary Frederiksen, Quality Rated Standardization and Evaluation Anchor
David Ginsburg, Contract and Procurement Attorney
Kristin Goetz, Professional Learning Specialist
Jessica Guarneros, Research Analyst 2
Iris Herrera, Training Approval Specialist

Randy Hudgins, Director of Research and Policy Analysis
Denise, Jenson, Director, Quality Rated
Melinda Knowles, Quality Rated Assessor
Jarita Lawrence-Burdette, EHS Business Operations Specialist
Laura Lucas, Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Director
Barbara McWethy, Workforce Support Manager
Lindsay Miller, Quality Rated Structural Quality Manager
Christi Moore, Professional Learning Director
Sara Myers, Quality Rated Assessor
Amir Nilforooshan, IT Support Specialist
Quandra Obi, Special Assistant to the Commissioner
Rob O'Callaghan, Senior Research Analyst
Jill O'Meara, Community Partnerships and Projects Manager
Rhonda Parker, CCS Director of Field Operations
Valerie Perez, Research Analyst
Martine Powe, Quality Rated Assessor
Laura Reid, Professional Learning Community Specialist
Anne Rein, Department Writer/Editor
Mike Rodgers, Director, Finance
April Rogers, Director, CCS Enforcement Operations
Brenna Rutherford, Quality Rated Assessor
Jackie Shivers, Director, Pre-K Quality Support
Richa Singhania, Research Analyst
Hannah Smith, Early Education Community Partnerships Coordinator CE
Nate Smith, Professional Learning Systems Manager
Sonja Steptoe, QIP Communications and Outreach Manager
Robin Stevens, Director of Human Resources
Diane Swift, Quality Rated Regional Coordinator, Central Georgia
Alysse Swiney, Grant Accountant
Michelle Talley, Quality Rated Assessor
Megan Torello, Quality Rated Special Projects Manager
Keturah Wafer, Procurement and Facilities Specialist
Laura Wagner, Director, QIP Policy and Partnerships
Bridgette Washington, Early Education Community Partnerships Coordinator CW
Kori Woodward-Dickens, Legal Services Officer
Alexandra Young, Research and Policy Coordinator
Liz Young, Government Relations Director

The May 19, 2022 meeting of the Board of Early Care and Learning was held in the Oak Conference room and livestreamed via GoToWebinar.

1. Call to Order

At 9:05 a.m. Board Chair Phil Davis called the meeting to order.

2. Welcome

Mr. Davis welcomed Board members, DECAL staff, and guests.

3. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Mr. Davis asked for a motion to accept the meeting agenda. Ms. Morrissey moved to accept, and Ms. Beam seconded. The Board accepted the agenda unanimously. Mr. Davis asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February meeting. Ms. Beam moved to approve, and Ms. Morrissey seconded. The Board approved the minutes unanimously.

4. Inspiration

Ms. Brock provided inspiration, reading passages from the book *Together is Better* about the role of leaders in helping children become as successful as they can be as students and, eventually, adults.

5. Board Member Updates

Mr. Davis invited Board members to provide updates of their recent activities. Ms. Morrissey and Ms. Washell both reported attending Pre-K Teacher of the Year events. Ms. Beam said she was just happy to be attending in person and seeing everyone. Ms. Zisook said she has noticed that Pre-K enrollment numbers are bouncing back from the dips of the past two years. Ms. Purcell enjoyed Moonlight Through the Pines and congratulated Georgia Early Care and Learning Foundation Executive Director Carrie Ashbee on organizing a successful event. Ms. Hill reported an enjoyable visit to the child care center she formerly owned and recently retired from. Ms. Brock said she is excited that one of the new teachers at her school is a former Pre-K teacher of the year.

6. DECAL Staff Reports

DECAL leaders provided updates about the agency's work.

a. Commissioner's Update

Commissioner Amy Jacobs passed around a copy of *Hey, Georgia*, this year's Pre-K book which commemorates the 30th anniversary of Georgia's Pre-K. *Hey, Georgia* was inspired by Georgia First Lady Marty Kemp and written by former football star Malcolm Mitchell, now a public advocate for literacy and reading. Copies will be sent to Pre-K classrooms and every child enrolled in a Pre-K program. Plans for the 30th anniversary celebrations are forthcoming. The Commissioner announced the 2022–2023 finalists for Pre-K Teachers of the Year. From public schools, the finalists are Debbie Carraway from Thomas County, Melissa Boswell from Houston County, and Shannon Gibson from Habersham County. From private centers, the finalists are Shazia Ali from Gwinnett County, Alaina Jones from Forsyth County, and Silina Hodges from Coweta County. Finalists receive \$500 for their own use which is funded by the DECAL Foundation. Celebrations for the 10-year anniversary of Quality Rated, Georgia's voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) will kick off with Commissioner Jacobs throwing out the first pitch at a Braves game on Labor Day weekend. A communication campaign throughout the coming school year will promote the importance of high-quality child care. Quality Rated providers will receive new signs, thanks to \$500,000 in privately-raised funds. DECAL will produce a book for toddlers and a toolbox for teachers; and there will be regional tours and celebrations in the fall.

Mr. Davis commented that many exciting things are happening and thanked the Commissioner for her presentation.

b. Finance and Administration Update

Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration Rian Ringsrud provided his regular quarterly update on DECAL's expenses vs. the budget as of March 31, 2022. With 25% of the year remaining,

DECAL has 32% of allocated funds still available. Some of the initiatives funded by federal COVID-19 relief got underway after the start of the fiscal year and are playing catch-up. The numbers also include encumbrances; and Quality Initiatives, which has several encumbrances, has 18% of funds available for the year. The Amended budget for SFY 2022 passed by the Georgia Legislature includes an additional \$759,686 for this year, of which \$300,000 for Nutrition Services was added after the Governor's budget recommendations were sent to the Legislature. The final appropriation for SFY 2023 includes an increase of \$22 million, more than \$18 million of which goes to fund the \$2,000 pay increases for lead and assistant Pre-K teachers. CCS and CAPS will also receive additional funding. This is the first time that state funds have been contributed to the Nutrition Services program, and Georgia is the only state in the southeast that has state funds invested in this federal program. Nutrition Services will use the additional funds to provide start-up grants of up to \$25,000 to experienced sponsors for the purpose of expanding Happy Helpings into one or more of 75 counties that did not have a Happy Helpings site last summer.

Ms. Harper asked whether \$25,000 will cover all the costs of starting up in a new location. Mr. Ringsrud responded that specific plans will vary from sponsor to sponsor. Some sponsors, he said, plan to use the funds to buy vehicles to transport food from where they are to the county in which we're incenting them to serve. In some instances, he said, the grant probably would cover all the startup costs. In other instances the sponsors will likely have to supplement the grant with their normal summer food funding.

Mr. Davis asked whether Mr. Ringsrud is seeing any evidence of an economic downturn. Mr. Ringsrud said state general revenues and lottery revenues continue to be strong; and, as long as these trends continue, DECAL is in very good shape for 2023 and 2024.

c. Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports Update

Deputy Commissioner for Georgia's Pre-K and Instructional Supports Susan Adams shared highlights from Children's Mental Health Week, which included Commissioner Jacobs reading *Suri Spider Selects a Solution*, which was funded by a Community Transformation Grant to a community partnership led by the University of West Georgia and a short video about social emotional health created by DECAL. Ms. Adams reviewed some recent achievements related to infant and early childhood mental health. These include establishing the Georgia Alliance for Infant Mental Health (GA-AIMH); the passage of the Mental Health Parity Act; the publication of a chart for mental health clinicians showing how they can bill Medicaid for services to children age birth to 6 and their families; and securing funds to train clinicians in Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP). The latter will help alleviate the shortage of clinicians in Georgia who are trained to work with very young children. The initial cohort will have 60 participants. Ms. Adams gave an overview of the Georgia's Pre-K Summer Transition Program. The program for rising Pre-K students is for children whose first language is Spanish, and the instruction is bilingual. Like last year the class sizes are lower for both programs, and there is no family income limit. There are 720 slots in 20 counties for rising Pre-K students and 3,816 slots in 61 counties for rising Kindergarteners. A total of 3,792 grants were awarded for Pre-K providers for the coming school year. There will be 3,742 continuing classrooms, 21 new classrooms in facilities that do not currently have a Pre-K program, and 39 expansion classrooms in programs that already have a Pre-K program. Additional grants will be awarded as new areas of need are identified.

Mr. Davis asked whether Ms. Adams' team is seeing any demand for programs beyond Spanish and English. Ms. Adams replied that there is some demand, and the team has piloted multilingual classes for rising Pre-K children. It is difficult, she said to match teachers to classrooms where there is a need for a

different language. Ms. Adams also said that the Summer Transition programs provide an opportunity for additional teacher training. Teachers of rising kindergarteners will focus on trauma-informed care and social emotional development, and teachers of rising Pre-K students will focus on dual language learners. This might possibly pave the way for expansion to other languages, but the challenges remain.

Ms. Harper asked what other languages are in demand. Ms. Adams said Spanish is the most requested followed by Asian languages including Vietnamese and Mandarin, some African languages, French, and other European languages. In areas where refugees are resettled, there are many different languages.

Ms. Adams introduced Director of Professional Learning Christi Moore who gave an update about the \$1,000 supplemental POWER payments to the early learning workforce. Her team fielded an optional survey of recipients, collecting demographic data such as languages spoken at home and educational credentials in order to learn more about the early care and education workforce. Dr. Moore shared preliminary information from the survey of Round 1 recipients. As many as 89% of the eligible workforce received Round 1 payments, she said. The survey also asked whether respondents had experienced a reduction in work hours or loss of income during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Most child care workers did not experience loss of income; but, of those affected, those in family child care learning homes saw more reductions. Staff who were eligible for Round 2 POWER payments are also receiving \$125 grants that they can use to buy instructional materials for their classrooms. Applications for Round 3 POWER payments will be accepted from June 1 to July 1.

Ms. Morrissey asked the source of funds for the classroom grants. Ms. Moore replied that they are funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

7. Break

Mr. Davis recessed the meeting for a short break at 10:07 a.m. The meeting resumed and staff reports continued at 10:22 a.m.

d. Child Care Services (CCS) Update

Deputy Commissioner for Child Care Services Pam Stevens reviewed the specific language for the proposed rule changes. The Board will be asked to vote on the rule changes at the next meeting. The rules for Child Care Learning Centers (CCLC) and Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLH) mirror each other, and most are minor wording changes. CCLC rules 591-1-1-.02 and .09 and FCCLH rules 290-2-3-.03 and .21 remove the word “paper” in reference to criminal background checks. All criminal background checks are now submitted electronically as a safeguard against fraud. CCLC rule 290-2-3-.07 and FCCLH rule 290-2-3-.08 require providers to notify parents in writing about cases or suspected cases of any communicable disease. CCLC rule 591-1-1-.08 updates language about intellectual disabilities. CCLC rules 591-1-1-.29 and .37 and FCCLH rules 290-2-3-.05 and .14 require that records of required reporting be preserved for 12 months and broaden the definition of “records” to include audio, video, photos, written documentation, social media posts, and other electronic information. FCCLH rule 290-2-3-.05 also requires that providers allow access to all parts of the home for inspections and investigations. Ms. Stevens also noted that some language may change as a result of review by DECAL’s Chief Legal Officer and feedback received during the public comment period during the summer.

Mr. Davis asked, “Is there no longer an issue with any of our rural locations processing records electronically?” Ms. Stevens said providers have received a lot of training and that is no longer an issue.

Mr. Davis asked whether the storage requirements will be a cost issue. Ms. Stevens said, “Yes, and that’s one of the things we need to explore with providers and get comments about how the records will be stored. Part of what we want to communicate to child care providers is that their records can protect them. If there’s a complaint, it could help the provider to be able to show what actually happened in a classroom because not all of the complaints we receive are substantiated.”

Ms. Harper asked Ms. Stevens to elaborate on “intellectual disabilities.” Ms. Stevens said that the phrase replaces “mental retardation.”

Ms. Morrissey asked whether emails would fall under electronic records and whether it would be a good idea to include emails explicitly. Ms. Stevens said that CCS has an Indicator Manual describing exactly what’s required and agreed it might be a good idea to include emails explicitly.

Ms. Washell said she had a concern about one word having to do with different conditions described under “records” and recommended a wording change. Ms. Stevens said DECAL will consider it.

Ms. Stevens continued her presentation with a review of attendance data going back to FY2018. In Q1 and Q2 of this year attendance at CCLCs was up by 9% over last year. Compared in FY2019, however, CCLC attendance was still down by 18% in the first quarter and 19% in the second quarter. CCLC attendance for Q3 of this year was up by 14% over last year and down by 12% over FY2019. Attendance at FCCLHs was down by 5% during Q1 of this year compared to last year, but it is now very close to pre-pandemic levels. These trends indicate that attendance is slowly making its way back to pre-pandemic levels, and our stabilization efforts continue to be very important, Ms. Stevens said. She also presented graphs showing trends in the number of child care facilities in operation. Since 2018 the number of Family Child Care Learning Homes (FCCLH) has been declining. The number of Child Care Learning Centers (CCLC) has stayed about the same, but the capacity of CCLCs has expanded.

Mr. Davis asked whether there is any chance that these trends could impact the number of Pre-K slots. Ms. Adams responded that because the demand for Pre-K has always exceeded the number of slots, she doesn’t anticipate any reduction in the number of Pre-K slots.

Ms. Morrissey said she was in a recent conversation with someone in the state legislature who feels very strongly that Pre-K is important, leading her to believe that ‘legislative support is there.’

Ms. Harper reported that the Dougherty County school system has a waiting list for Pre-K.

e. Federal Programs Update

Deputy Commissioner for Federal Programs Elisabetta Kasfir announced that some funds from the Aspen Policy Acceleration Partnership grant, which funds a partnership among DECAL, the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), and others, are being used to develop a comprehensive resource and referral portal called FindHelp Georgia, the goals of which are to make it easier for families to access services and expand the state’s 2Gen network. DECAL joined forces with Prevent Child Abuse Georgia which was already developing a portal. The portal, which will have a soft launch in June, has links to state agencies and also nonprofits that offer a wide variety of services such as food pantries, housing, children’s special needs, and others. Families may self-refer or be referred by participating organizations. Information will be updated at least every six months. Participating organizations may claim their pages and update them as often as they choose. The site will also collect data about which services are being sought most frequently. The portal will serve as infrastructure for the state’s 2Gen network. Ms. Kasfir also announced that CAPS has created a new priority group for student parents. Several of the other priority groups are based on negative circumstances that families and children might

experience such as homelessness or children in foster care. The student parent priority group is based on the positive circumstance of a parent deciding to further their education. Eligible education programs include ESL and GED classes as well as coursework at technical colleges and associate's and bachelor's degree curricula.

Board member Zisook commended the work involved in creating FindHelp Georgia, saying it will be a valuable resource to many children. So many children need services, she said, and it's difficult for child care centers to match them up. She also asked if the Alliance for Infant Mental Health can be wrapped into the service. Ms. Kasfir responded that it already is. Calls to Find Help Georgia are routed to a service of Prevent Child Abuse Georgia called Healthy Mothers and Healthy Babies. They currently serve as the call center for Babies Can't Wait, Children First, and other programs. If they get calls about child care, they'll be referring to the DECAL service, All Georgia Kids. DECAL has consulted with the programs that are specialists in all the needs and issues that appear on Find Help Georgia, and the experts have specified where requests for help should be directed.

Ms. Morrissey asked about the soft release in June. Ms. Kasfir said that the portal will be open to the public. At the same time DECAL will conduct training and outreach led by Prevent Child Abuse Georgia for organizations listed on Find Help Georgia to encourage them to claim their sites. They'll be listed before they claim their sites, Ms. Kasfir said, but by claiming their sites they can make their information more robust.

Mr. Davis asked whether the portal will be available to Board members. Ms. Kasfir responded that it will be available to everyone. Phase 2 of the rollout will include training for DECAL staff, TCSG staff, and other organizations. Frontline staff will have access to a staff portal. One of the things DECAL is excited about, Ms. Kasfir said, is the ability to refer families to TCSG to further their education.

f. Quality Innovation and Partnerships (QIP) Update

Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships Bentley Ponder announced that live ERS observations will resume in Cohort 3, beginning July 1, as planned. Reliability recertification for assessors is well underway. In relation to the CAPS/QR goal that all CAPS providers would be rated by December 31, 2021, providers in probationary or provisional status are making progress. Seven of 128 providers in probationary status are now ready to rate as are 11 of 132 providers in provisional status. As of February 28, 96% of children with CAPS scholarships are cared for by a Quality Rated provider, and 90% of CAPS providers have achieved at least a 1-star rating. Of providers who are rated, 40% are 1-star, 44% are 2-star, and 16% are 3-star.

Ms. Morrissey commended the progress toward getting all CAPS providers rated. Noting that 40% of Quality Rated providers have a 1-star rating, she asked if there are efforts to encourage providers to keep improving their ratings. Mr. Ponder responded that providers are required to be rerated every three years, and before the pandemic, there were providers who successfully pursued higher ratings. A 3-star rating is designed to be somewhat difficult to achieve, he said; and he expects that some providers will continue to strive for higher ratings.

Ms. Harper commented that the requirement for CAPS providers to be Quality Rated is an incentive to motivate providers to maintain quality. Mr. Ponder also reminded everyone that there is tiered-reimbursement for CAPS providers; those with more stars receive higher reimbursement rates.

Mr. Davis congratulated DECAL for remarkable achievements over the past 10 years. He recalled that when Quality Rated first got started, he got excited every time he saw an organization with the Quality Rated logo; now providers without the logo are more noticeable.

Mr. Ponder continued his presentation with an update about the Quality Rated Language and Literacy Endorsement, an additional recognition available to 2- and 3-star providers. A second cohort of the yearlong program began in May with 24 CCLCs participating. A pilot with 15 FCCLHs will begin soon. The program is a collaboration between QIP and Instructional Supports. The Professional Learning team led by Director Christi Moore designs, creates, and delivers all the professional development, a key component of the Endorsement. Other components include technology grants, classroom materials, stipends for teachers and directors who complete the training, and grants to implement the growth plans that participants develop toward the end of the program. Mr. Ponder announced that DECAL recently awarded four 2Gen capacity-building grants of \$10,000 and eight implementation grants of \$25,000. DECAL has been awarding 2Gen grants since 2018. Mr. Ponder reported progress on the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) administrative restructuring. Six specialists have been hired; three work with family support, and three work with education, disabilities and mental health. Current priorities include addressing CCLC staff shortages, identifying new FCCLH partners, and helping providers get to full enrollment. Mr. Ponder also praised the Community Coordinators who have created regional Child Care Engagement Networks and the Research and Policy Analysis team that supports all of DECAL's programs with data analysis and helps keep projects aligned with each other.

Ms. Purcell said that as a longtime Board member she appreciates how much the Research function and the Department have grown. "It truly does make a difference," she said "in the services you are able to provide. You can do a great job, but if you can't show people in black and white that you're doing a great job, you lose your funding. Having seen the growth, I recognize how the Commissioner has worked to make it happen." Mr. Ponder said he has learned that when hiring Research staff, it's important for candidates to excel at research, but they also need to have passion for the work of the Agency.

g. Head Start Collaboration Office

Georgia Head Start Collaboration Director Allison Setterlind told the Board that Head Start celebrated its 57th birthday on May 18. On that day in 1965 President Lyndon Johnson signed the Head Start Project Act. It began as a short summer program for families who were experiencing poverty. The key to sustaining the program over almost six decades she said, is that the states do not administer the program. Head Start is a federal-to-local community grant in which grantees, (32 agencies in Georgia including DECAL) design their programs around local community needs. Programs are federally monitored and must meet federal standards, but no two programs are identical. Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Georgia serve approximately 24,000 children and pregnant women. For the first time in about six years the Federal Office of Head Start has established several interdependent national priorities: advancing equity, promoting pandemic recovery, investing in the workforce, and reaching more children and families. The Georgia Head Start Collaboration Office received a new five-year grant this year, which provides an opportunity to review the alignment between DECAL and Head Start. One priority for the Head Start Collaboration Office is making sure that every Head Start program that should be licensed is licensed. A recent decision expands eligibility for Head Start to include families on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Prior to this decision families on public assistance were eligible based on receiving Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) or social security. Currently, there are more 200,000 children in Georgia under the age of 5 who are on SNAP,

and Head Start programs will not be able to serve all those children. Every grantee will need a rating scale that assigns points based on families' specific needs.

8. Lunch and Committee Meetings

Mr. Davis asked the Board Committees to appoint chairpersons to report back on committee meetings. He adjourned for lunch at 11:33 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 12:50 p.m.

9. Committee Reports

Ms. Morrissey reported that the Finance Committee received an update on the FY2022 budget as of April 30, as of which 17% of the fiscal year remains. DECAL's expenses remain on track with the budget she said. She reported that Mr. Ringsrud explained that encumbrances include things like contracts. She also reported that this year 92% of funds coming into DECAL go out to operations, an improvement over last year's rate of 91%.

10. Public Comment Period

Mr. Davis paused the committee reports for the public comment period. He reminded Board members that their role during public comments is to listen and understand rather than respond. Mr. Ed Juline, Owner and CEO of Club SciKidz Atlanta, commented that he wanted the Board's help to avert a crisis. He said he had been in business for 20 years and described his business cycle, saying that parents register their children for summer camp as early as October or November for the following summer. He continued, "We have applied for nine exemptions for our programs, of which we have received four. We have spent thousands of dollars and countless hours on this, trying to get these exemptions in place. I don't know if we're going to get the last five. I've talked to dozens of other camp operators, and they tell me one of two things: 'Don't get involved with DECAL; avoid them like the plague,' or 'It's limited my business, and I can't grow anymore.' So in April 2021, this Board decided to put a process in place to comply with zoning, building, fire, and health requirements, and the method by which they wanted to do that was requiring these documents from the locations that we are renting, locations that we are begging to rent. This is not something where they're coming to us and saying, 'Bring your summer camps here.' There is fierce competition for these locations. These locations are often grandfathered in; they're CCLCs or churches and their exemption was grandfathered in before April, and so they never had to present these documents, and they often ask us, 'Why?' And we say, 'It's a new thing with DECAL,' and they say, 'Well, maybe you should find another church.' It's frustrating. So these are churches and private schools, churches that have schools, churches that have schools with kids going every day."

Ms. Obi informed Mr. Juline that his time was up. He asked for and was given an extension. He continued, "So I don't know if we'll make it, but if I lose one site, I lose it all. The company's bankrupt. I have to refund hundreds of parents. I'm going to have 350 East Cobb moms devastated. So, here's our ideas. None of these are good for you, but we're trying everything to make this work. One is if the facility has a grandfathered exemption, let us ride on that on that grandfathering until the facility has to then present these documents. Don't make us the bad guys that have to go out and force these facilities to do something that they don't want to do anyway. Number two, if the fire inspection is the problem, let the fire marshal do his job and go get the fire inspection. Don't make us beg the fire marshal and the facility and everybody else to try to get this all done in such a short period of time. It was suggested by DECAL that we shouldn't open registrations until we have the exemption. That puts us out of business. We have to get the facility in

October, and it takes four months, six months to get an exemption. That won't work. The last possibility is if we don't make it in time to start summer camps with an exemption, give us a six-month waiver to get through the summer so we don't go bankrupt. Then the next year there is no leeway. So, this is a crisis. I'm not sleeping; my team's not sleeping; the other people in the city here are panicking that they're going to have to get exemptions. The process is broken. Please help us fix it so we don't end up with thousands of kids without summer camps to go to. Thank you."

Mr. Davis asked Ms. Obi if there were any other comments, and she said there were none. Mr. Davis closed the public comment period and resumed the committee reports.

11. Committee Reports (continued)

Ms. Hill reported that the Quality Innovations and Partnerships Committee first talked about the EHS-CCP. EHS-CCP Director Megan Fickes gave more detail on the challenges of finding qualified staff and achieving full enrollment. The team is developing creative ways to attract staff, and some of the federal COVID funds have been set aside for recruitment and retention. The Early Head Start requirement that all programs maintain full enrollment was suspended during the pandemic but goes back into effect September 1. The team is focused on engaging new family child care providers and rebuilding relationships with existing programs. Community Outreach and Partnerships Director Laura Wagner and Community Partnerships and Projects Manager Jill O'Meara also presented to the Committee about the Community Transformation grants, which are intended to support local communities as they address the critical needs of children birth to 5 and their families. Currently there are eight grantees around the state. The needs that the grants address include food insecurity, dual language learners, reducing suspensions and expulsions in early care and learning programs, mental health services, and improving access to high-quality early learning programs. The grants are funded up to \$75,000 and run for 18 months.

Ms. Beam reported that the Program and Rules Committee received more information about the Find Help/Gateway Community Partners to help families more easily access services. The Committee also learned more about the Class Wallet classroom grants and a PPE grant through the DOE for testing for lead in schools and preschools and providing low-cost remediation if lead is found. The Committee heard a more detailed presentation about DECAL's activities related to social emotional learning and the fact that DECAL provides state-level leadership in this area. Nutrition Services is expanding to include a physical activity component.

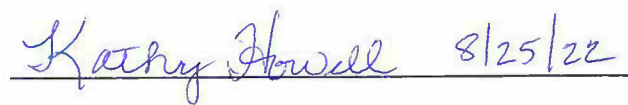
12. Adjournment

At 1:08 p.m. Mr. Davis thanked the Committees for their reports. He asked whether there was any other business for the Board. There being none, he announced the date of the next meeting, August 25, and adjourned the meeting.



Board Chair, Signature

Date



Board Secretary, Signature

Date