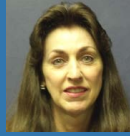


Decidedly DECAL

Highlighting the Events That Shape Who We Are



November 2014 - In This Issue

- [By the Numbers](#)
- [Important Links](#)
- [SCCP Update](#)
- [November Birthdays](#)
- [Dual Learners Partnership](#)
- [Open Enrollment](#)
- [Board of Early Care and Learning](#)
- [Commissioner's Corner](#)
- [Annual License Fees](#)
- [Federal Grant for Pre-K Expansion](#)
- [Pre-K Week Highlights](#)
- [Quality Rated Promotion](#)
- [Child Development Lab Visit](#)
- [Head Start Anniversary](#)

DECAL By the Numbers

- \$32 million** - Amount of federal grant to expand Pre-K to be spent over four years
- 84,000** - Students attending Georgia's Pre-K Program this school year
- 3,817** - Funded Pre-K classes this school year
- 140** - Georgia counties with participating Quality Rated programs
- 5,435** - Child care programs in Georgia
- 24,083** - Georgia children served by Head Start, 2013 - 2014
- 3,111** - Children served by Early Head Start, 2013 - 2014
- 32** - Pre-K classroom visits by First Lady Sandra Deal for Georgia's Pre-K Month

Quick Links

- [DECAL on Facebook](#)
- [DECAL on Twitter](#)
- [DECAL on Instagram](#)
- [DECAL on Pinterest](#)
- [DECAL Website](#)



Strong Year for State
Charitable Contributions
Program

Commissioner's Corner

by *Interim Commissioner Amy Jacobs*

Dear Fellow DECALers,

Last month, I celebrated my first Georgia's Pre-K Week as Interim Commissioner of DECAL and what else can I say but --- Wow! The experience of visiting several Pre-K classrooms and seeing how excited four year olds become with a special guest reading books to them was exhilarating and inspiring, especially when those special guests include Governor Nathan Deal, First Lady Sandra Deal, and a very popular feline known as "Pete the Cat."



I want to thank Voices for Georgia's Children, Georgia Power, Scholastic, Synovus, and our own amazing Pre-K consultants and staff for making this event so successful and memorable for everyone. Over 150 state, business, and community leaders participated. This included the Governor, First Lady, and several members of the Governor's staff; 78 state representatives, 32 state senators, and a number of local officials from police chiefs and mayors to county commissioners and firefighters. Hopefully you've had a chance to see all the photos we posted to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. It was a beautiful picture of how the whole community...and the whole state...can come together in support of our children. The kids absolutely loved it, and I know the week left a lasting impression on all the adults as well.

Georgia's Pre-K Program is nationally recognized and supports a critical development milestone in the lives of our children. As you will read in this newsletter, we have applied for a multi-million dollar federal grant to expand Pre-K in areas of high-need around the state. The four-year grant administered by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will enable Georgia to develop "Georgia's Pre-K Plus," offering targeted services to eligible children in high-need communities while ensuring that the Pre-K program remains universal. I am very excited about this opportunity, and we should know something toward the end of December...maybe just in time for the holidays!

I appreciate all of your efforts during Georgia Pre-K Week and every day as we strive to build a strong educational foundation for the future of our children. Investing in our children is investing in our future...and that includes our money, as well as our time and talents. We can all look forward to the dividends as we see them learn and grow each day.

Sincerely,
Amy

The deadline for participating in the State Charitable Contributions Program (SCCP) has been extended to Friday, November 14, 2014. The SCCP is an opportunity for State of Georgia and University System employees to contribute to the charity of their choice through payroll deduction or a one-time donation. Employees can choose from over 1,000 charities. Each independent charity or federation of charities has been certified by the program to be responsible, effective, and upstanding.

Final totals are still being determined; however, as of last week DECAL had generously donated close to \$5,600 to the campaign. In addition to employee contributions, DECAL hosts a variety of special events to raise money for the SCCP. This year's most popular event was the SLT Ice Bucket Challenge, raising \$530, followed closely by Penny Wars with \$520.90 raised. Jeans Week raised \$355, a Sundae Social raised \$150, and the Bizarre Bazaar raised \$135.50.

This year's SCCP at DECAL was supervised by members of the Employee Advisory Group. Special thanks to Human Resources Assistant Sabrina Henry.

November Birthdays



Best wishes go out to the following DECAL employees who celebrate birthdays this month:

- 1 - Tammie Baldwin
- 1 - Alison Benson
- 1 - Connie Fisher
- 2 - Robin Currie
- 2 - Jeanne Renfroe
- 3 - Rachel Fowler
- 4 - Rian Ringsrud
- 6 - Joyce Collins
- 6 - Leah Klatzker
- 8 - Arlene Green
- 9 - Leslie Truman
- 10 - Shannon Carroll
- 10 - Edna Zimmerman
- 11 - Shani Drake
- 13 - Colleen Covey
- 13 - Andrea McFarland
- 14 - Gary Amos
- 14 - Jessica Grant
- 14 - Rommel Telfair
- 16 - Shyreeta Hicks
- 16 - Nikiesha Neil



DECAL Interim Commissioner Amy Jacobs joined First Lady Sandra Deal in reading to several Pre-K classes for Georgia's Pre-K Week.

DECAL Priority:

Ensure Health & Safety

Annual License Fees Due December 1

Georgia's 5,434 child care learning centers, group day care homes and family day care homes are being mailed notices today reminding them to pay their annual license fees by December 1, 2014. Fees vary based on the licensed capacity for each facility but the maximum amount is \$250 for larger child care learning centers.

Rhonda Parker, CCS Field Operations Director, said the official due date is December 1, 2014; however, state law provides for a 30-day "grace period" in which providers can pay their license fees without penalty through December 31, 2014. Payments received on or after January 1, 2015, will be assessed a late fee of half the provider's annual license fee. For providers that have not paid license fees by that time, license revocations begin February 1, 2015.

"Providers are encouraged to pay online with a credit card or electronic check," said Parker. "A cashier's check mailed to DECAL is also acceptable, but make sure they pay the correct amount because it is non-refundable."

If a program has its license revoked for non-payment of license fees, they cannot apply again for one year, Parker explained.

Under Georgia law (O.C.G.A. Section 50-36-1), anyone applying for a public benefit is required to verify their lawful presence in the United States with Secure and Verifiable documents. This can include a US passport, driver's license or other photo identification. A DECAL license or registration is a public benefit issued to the owner of a child care facility each year. Therefore, the owner must submit the required Secure and Verifiable documents before the annual license will be issued.

Questions about license fees? Please call DECAL at 404-656-5957 and ask to speak with the Child Care Licensing Consultant of the Day.

DECAL Priority:

17 - George Davis
17 - Brenda Haynesworth
17 - Colette Upshaw
18 - Kelly Bastis
19 - Emily Groszoff
19 - Deanna Hibbard
22 - Lisa Rambhajan
23 - Mike Chandler
25 - Alva Huff
25 - Rita Lang
30 - Roslyn Coleman
30 - Shayla Lewis

Support for Dual Language Learners

DECAL has a new partnership with World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) to support young dual language learners in Georgia over the next four years, one of the initiatives in the Early Learning Challenge grant. The partnership with WIDA aligns with Georgia's focus on critical areas, such as contributing to supporting high needs children, developing a great workforce, and improving family engagement.

This partnership will assist practitioners in identifying dual language learners, children that are learning English and one or more languages, and supporting their language development - a key factor for school readiness.

By providing training and technical assistance on appropriately supporting linguistically and culturally diverse children and families, early care and education practitioners as well as school district personnel will be equipped with tools and strategies to support English and home language development. Home language is a valuable asset in early development and second language acquisition.

WIDA (www.wida.us/EarlyYears) will offer two seven-month training of trainers programs starting in January 2015. This program is based on the WIDA Early English Language Development Standards, a set of standards for dual language learners, age 2.5 - 5.5 years, which corresponds to the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). The trainers who have completed the program will return to their organizations to train staff on supporting dual language learners.

Open Enrollment Ends November 14

Open Enrollment for the 2015 State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) is now underway with a deadline of Friday, November 14, 2014, at 5:00 PM. [Click here](#) to access the

Increase Quality & Access

Georgia Seeking Federal Grant to Expand Georgia's Pre-K

Georgia has applied for a multi-million dollar federal grant to expand the state's nationally recognized Pre-K program in areas of high-need around the state. The four-year grant administered by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will enable Georgia to develop "Georgia's Pre-K Plus," offering targeted services to eligible children in high-need communities while ensuring that the Pre-K program remains universal, i.e., that any four year old can attend regardless of family income.

Georgia's Pre-K Plus would increase the number of slots in Georgia's Pre-K and Summer Transition Programs in the following five regions: Central (Bibb County), Metro (DeKalb County), North (Hall County, Gainesville City Schools), Southeast (Liberty, Long, McIntosh counties), and Southwest (Crisp, Sumpter, Macon counties). It would also reduce the class size to 20 and instructional staff child ratios to 1:10.

"For more than 20 years, Georgia has been committed to a universal program built on a private-public model that serves four year olds in every county, regardless of family income," said Amy Jacobs, DECAL Interim Commissioner. "We decided to apply for this grant once we felt confident it would have no impact on this successful model."

"Georgia has research to demonstrate the positive impacts of our Pre-K program, experience providing comprehensive services through our Summer Transition Program, and a strong early education department...one of only three in the nation... that can utilize many 'in-house' resources to ensure successful implementation of this grant," Commissioner Jacobs added.

The Preschool Development Grants Program provides funding for development grants and expansion grants. States with small or no state-funded preschool programs are eligible for development grants. States, like Georgia, that have robust state-funded preschool programs or that have been awarded a Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant are eligible for expansion grants.

In December 2013, Georgia was one of six states awarded funding through the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC). Georgia received \$51.7 million dollars to be used over a four-year period, the highest amount awarded among the six grants. Since it began in 1992, Georgia's nationally recognized Pre-K Program has served over 1.3 million children. This year, nearly 84,000 children are enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program.

Georgia's Pre-K Weeks Is a Big Success



First Lady Sandra Deal is pictured above at Childcare Network #126 in Thomaston. The photo below was taken during a visit by Governor Nathan Deal and the First Lady

Child care centers and public schools across the state celebrated Georgia's Pre-K Week October 6-10, welcoming more than 150 state, business, and community leaders into their classrooms to learn more about the value of early childhood education. The event was hosted again this year by Voices for Georgia's Children and supported by Georgia Power, Synovus and Scholastic Corporation.

Final results are still being tallied, but it appears that 78 state representatives and 32 state senators participated this year. Governor Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal were the first to take part on Monday, October 6, at the Easter Seals Child Development Center in Atlanta. Mrs. Deal read to children across the state the entire month of October in observance of the Georgia Children's Cabinet's "Georgia's Pre-K Month."

Local officials from mayors to county commissioners also participated in the annual program.

SHBP site.

Annual Open Enrollment for the 2015 Flexible Benefits Plan, conducted through GaBreeze, is also underway with a deadline of Friday, November 14, 2014, at midnight. [Click here](#) for the GaBreeze website.

The enrollment period is condensed to three weeks so be sure to enroll early to avoid the heavy volume of traffic at the tail-end of Open Enrollment.

Employee Suggestion Program

You know that **great idea** you have for our department?
We cannot read your **MIND**.
That is why DECAL has



Keith D. Bostick, L.C.S.W.
Deputy Commissioner for Programs

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM

[Visit the Virtual Suggestion Box Now!](#)

October Quality Rated Programs



We are excited to announce the October 2014

Quality Rated Programs

- Burke County Head Start, Waynesboro ★★
- Cartersville Child Care Inc, Cartersville ★★
- Discovery Point #40, Buford ★★
- Jenkins County Head Start, Millen ★★
- Kindercare Learning Center #407, Jonesboro ★★
- La Petite Academy - Highway 138, Conyers ★★
- Lincoln County Head Start, Lincolnton ★★
- Mutrice F. Vanderpool, Grayson ★★
- Tashia Valentine, Riverdale ★★
- Vienna Head Start, Vienna ★★
- Wanda G. Earley, Riverdale ★★



to Easter Seals Child Development Center in Atlanta.



Thank You Mrs. Deal for visiting **32 classrooms** during #GaPreKMonth



Child Care Services Promoting Quality Rated

Consultants with DECAL's Child Care Services (CCS) Division are helping promote Quality Rated, Georgia's system to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. The CCS Quality Rated Recruitment Challenge kicked off September 25, 2014. Consultants are working to recruit child care programs that have a history of four year compliance.

"With almost 100 consultants working directly with some 5,500 providers across the state, it made sense for us to be involved," said Kristie Lewis, Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Services. "Having our consultants involved is essential to DECAL achieving our Early Learning Challenge goal of 1,755 participating providers at the end of this year. While CCS continues to focus on ensuring health and safety in our programs, our participation in helping to recruit programs into QR will in the end raise both the level of compliance and improve quality."

At press time, there were 1,512 child care programs participating in Quality Rated, with 400 rated

Board of Early Care and Learning

Supporting and guiding the mission and vision of Bright from the Start:

Board of Early Care and Learning

Kay Ford, Savannah
First Congressional District

Susan Harper, Albany
Second Congressional District
(Secretary)

Kathy Howell, Carrollton
Third Congressional District

Phil Davis, Stone Mountain
Fourth Congressional District

Carlene Talton, Decatur
Fifth Congressional District

Dawnn Henderson, Marietta
Sixth Congressional District

Sherron Murphy, Lawrenceville
Seventh Congressional District

Luann Purcell, Ed.D., Warner Robins
Eighth Congressional District
(Vice Chair)

Tammy Lenkeit, Hoschton
Ninth Congressional District

Janice Gallimore, Greensboro
Tenth Congressional District

Victor Morgan, Cartersville
Eleventh Congressional District
(Chair)

Jerri Kropp, Statesboro
Twelfth Congressional District

Judy Neal, Stockbridge
Thirteenth Congressional District

Tangela Johnson, Cohutta
Fourteenth Congressional District

We are committed to nurturing Georgia's youngest children, keeping them safe and healthy, and to enriching their lives.

The Faces of DECAL

DECAL faces featured in the banner of this issue are (L-R) Allison Carwile, Rhonda Gunn, Kiejuan Davis, Aleta Gass, Alethea Cicero-Brown, Donna Marks, and Kaisha Sherrills..

programs.

Lewis congratulated Top Performers Colleen Covey, Heather Reeves, Leah Klatzker, Shamonica Reese, and LaQuita Clarke.

"This partnership between our Child Care Services and Quality Rated divisions is critical to Georgia's goal of achieving 100% program participation in Quality Rated," said Kristin Bernhard, Deputy Commissioner for System Reform. "I'm thankful to the CCS team for embracing this challenge and can't wait to congratulate the winning consultants at the end of the year."

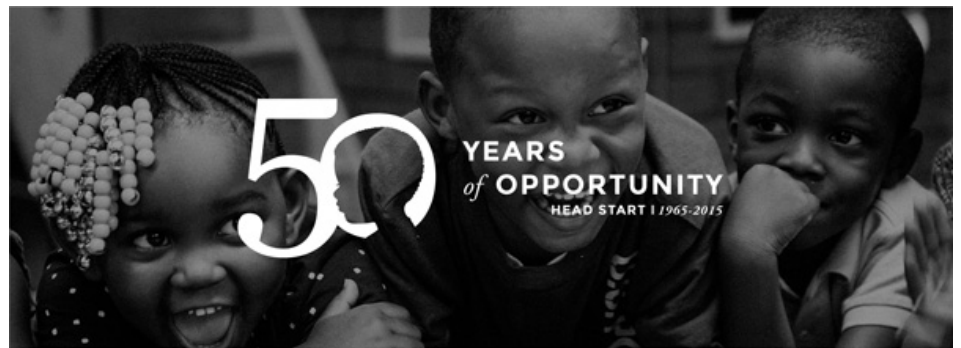
For more information on Quality Rated, visit www.qualityrated.dec.al.gov or www.qualityrated.org.

DECAL Priority:

Foster Organizational Excellence



DECAL Assistant Commissioner for Federal Programs and Administration Dee Bolden (third from left) recently visited the Child Development Lab at the McPhaul Center on the campus of the University of Georgia. The Child Development Lab is a three-star Quality Rated child care program, part of Georgia's initiative designed to help parents in selecting quality early education programs. Shown with Assistant Commissioner Bolden are (L-R) Quality Care for Children's Pam Runkle, Department Head for Human Development and Family Science Dr. Emilie Smith, Bolden, Center Director Amy Kay, and Quality Care for Children's Kathy Garrett and Victoria Hawkins.



For fifty years Head Start has been the premier model for providing the whole child an opportunity for success in school and in life. Since the summer of 1965, more than 31 million children have benefited from Head Start's comprehensive services - they have become business women and men, professors, teachers, lawyers, mayors, members of Congress, athletes, foundation presidents, Grammy-winning musicians, poets, and parents.

The National Head Start Association has organized eleven months of celebrations, beginning with

a rally on the grounds of the Capitol in Washington, DC and ending with a White House Rose Garden commemoration. In between, there will be events in which every Head Start program can participate.

In Georgia, Head Start works effectively with Georgia Pre-K to obtain maximum comprehensive services for four year olds and serve more three year olds. The Head Start State Collaboration Office resides at Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
