

**OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION'S (OSSE) DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING (DEL)
AND HURLEY AND ASSOCIATES, LLC (H&A)**

SCOPE OF WORK (SOW)

CAPITAL QUALITY, DC'S QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM ANALYSIS

BACKGROUND

OSSE is the state education agency for the District of Columbia and is charged with raising the quality of education for all DC residents. OSSE's Division of Early Learning (DEL) provides leadership and coordination to ensure that all District of Columbia children, from birth to kindergarten entrance, have access to high quality early childhood development programs and are well prepared for school. All child care programs operating in the District of Columbia must comply with established child care requirements, including licensure by OSSE DEL, unless specifically exempted. OSSE/DEL also administers the District's child care subsidy program, which assists low income families in paying for child care, and oversees Capital Quality, the District's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Funded through OSSE, the Building and Sustaining Quality Early Care and Education (BSQECE) grant was awarded to two grantees, one of which is Hurley and Associates (H&A) to provide ongoing, comprehensive support and implementation of a robust set of program areas that will directly and indirectly support families. The program areas H&A supports are: (1) Capital Quality the District's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS); (2) the DC Shared Services Business Alliance (DC SSBA); and (3) professional development for the early childhood workforce.

H&A is a dynamic, multi-faceted consulting firm dedicated to providing a spectrum of education services to private and non-profit organizations and government agencies at the local, state, and federal levels and supports the implementation of the BSQECE grant. H&A is composed of a cadre of expert educators and staff with demonstrated experience in the following areas: program evaluation, professional development of teachers and staff, monitoring and compliance, project management, subject matter expertise and technical assistance.

Capital Quality implementation is a key component of H&A's work and comprises four components: 1) a facility designation (e.g., developing, progressing, quality, high-quality) determined by the use of research-based metrics including CLASS for pre-K classrooms, Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) for infant/toddler classrooms, and Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS) for child development homes; 2) a continuous quality improvement plan (CQIP); 3) a quality profile posted on MyChildCare.dc.gov to provide quality information for families; and 4) one-on-one technical assistance provided by coaches, called Quality Facilitators. Designations are particularly salient for stakeholders because they are displayed publicly on MyChildCare.dc.gov and used to differentiate child care subsidy payment rates. Participation in Capital Quality is mandatory for CDFs that accept child care subsidies and voluntary for others.

DC implemented Capital Quality in stages, beginning in 2016 and reaching full implementation in FY19, just prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although program observations and ratings were paused during the pandemic and initial recovery, CDFs continued to receive coaching from Quality Facilitators, and early educators continued to access professional development related to ITERS, FCCERS, CLASS, and strategies to improve the quality of learning environments and adult:child interactions. As a result, in the spring of 2024, when Capital Quality ratings were updated for most programs for the first time since 2019, the percentage of programs achieving ratings that reflect quality learning environments and nurturing interactions (quality or high-quality) increased from 63 percent in 2019 to 88 percent in 2024. Scores across

CLASS domains improved for publicly funded pre-K programs in DCPS and public charter schools, which are not part of Capital Quality but are assessed using CLASS.

These results indicate that DC's quality improvement infrastructure is working to improve quality across the mixed delivery system. However, opportunities remain to build on this progress, particularly in the quality of feedback and concept development dimensions of the Instructional Support domain for pre-K classrooms across the mixed delivery system and for infant and toddler classrooms. Despite gains DC-wide and across sectors of the mixed delivery system, quality varies between individual schools, facilities, and classrooms with potentially inequitable implications for children's learning experiences and outcomes across schools and programs, creating a need to review and strengthen supports for programs whose assessed quality remains at lower levels.

To further advance DEL's effort to advance the work in the early care and education community in the District, OSSE/DEL, through H&A, will be utilizing a consultant to examine Capital Quality and make recommendations for the program moving forward.

PURPOSE

OSSE/DEL wants to provide all children with access to high-quality early childhood development programs and leverage investments to positively impact children and families. This includes access to high-quality child care facilities that help enable children to learn. OSSE/DEL and H&A seek to commission a consultant to better understand the current program and make recommendations for the program moving forward, as described in more detail below, in support of the BSQECE grant work.

Capital Quality and the tools it uses to measure program quality reflect the best available research at the time it was created. Eight years later, new research has emerged nationally, including Urban's research studying DC's implementation Capital Quality. New data, combined with measurable improvements in ECE program quality as measured by Capital Quality, make this an opportune time for DC to step back and assess the strengths and weaknesses of Capital Quality and identify potential changes to further advance equity and continuous quality improvement.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

OSSE/DEL will collaborate with an external consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of the Capital Quality program, including an analysis of data, stakeholder feedback, and current research. This process will inform the development of recommendations for an updated and improved Capital Quality framework and its implementation. The goal of these updates will be to modernize and enhance the quality improvement infrastructure in DC's early learning programs, with a focus on advancing equitable outcomes for children; supporting continuous program improvement; and providing transparent, accessible information to stakeholders to support family choice.

OBJECTIVES

1. Review data and lessons learned from the implementation of Capital Quality to date.
2. Collect stakeholder feedback on experiences with Capital Quality, focusing on the dimensions of quality most valued by stakeholders.
3. Conduct a literature review of academic research on early learning quality since 2016, exploring the landscape of available quality tools, best practices, and approaches from other states.

4. Develop a set of recommendations for changes to the Capital Quality framework and implementation based on the data analysis, feedback, and literature review.
5. Engage the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and external early learning stakeholders in the process of developing recommendations.
6. Ensure that recommendations prioritize continued program improvement, equitable outcomes for children, and transparent communication of program quality to key stakeholders, including educators, program leadership, families, and system leaders.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Review of Capital Quality Implementation Data

- Analyze existing data related to the implementation of Capital Quality to date.
- Analyze the effectiveness of Capital Quality, as implemented to date, in advancing multiple objectives: assessing the quality of early care and education programs, supporting ongoing continuous improvement, supporting families in choosing among child care options, and informing system-level policy and practice.
- Identify key successes, challenges, and lessons learned from the current system.

2. Stakeholder Feedback Collection

- Engage a diverse set of stakeholders, including educators, program leadership, families, and system leaders, to gather feedback on their perceptions of and experiences with Capital Quality, including those in child care centers and family child care homes.
- Identify which dimensions of quality are most valued by different stakeholder groups.
- Understand stakeholders' relative prioritization of Capital Quality's multiple objectives (e.g., assessing quality of early care education programs, supporting ongoing continuous improvement, supporting family information and choice, informing system level policy and practice, or other goals perceived or prioritized by stakeholders), and their perceptions/experience related to these objectives.
- Collect feedback on perceived barriers and opportunities for improvement in the current quality system.
- Collect feedback from individuals representing child development centers and homes and those who speak languages other than English, such as Spanish and Amharic.

3. Literature Review

- Conduct a high-level literature review on academic research related to early learning quality, focusing on new findings or developments in the state of knowledge about early learning quality since 2016.
- Review the landscape of relevant and most utilized or newly available tools for measuring and improving holistic early learning program quality.
- Analyze best practices and approaches to measuring and improving early learning quality used in other states, identifying relevant strategies for DC to consider.

4. Development of Recommendations for Capital Quality Improvements or Changes

- Based on the data analysis, stakeholder feedback, and literature review, develop a set of actionable recommendations for updates to the Capital Quality framework and associated policies and supports, including supports for early learning program improvement and how Capital Quality designations are or should be used to inform other policies and programs (e.g. child care subsidy reimbursement rates).
- Develop recommendations that reflect current research, support continuous program improvement, and promote equitable outcomes for children and early childhood providers.

- Identify budgetary implications or other resource needs associated with potential recommendations, including, as applicable, options for more efficiently or cost-effectively achieving program objectives.
 - Address implications for communicating program quality with early childhood providers, families and other stakeholders.
5. **Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration**
- Engage OSSE and external early learning stakeholders in a collaborative process to refine and finalize the recommendations.
 - Facilitate discussions to understand how proposed recommendations align with the needs of the community and the priorities of early learning professionals and families.
6. **Recommendations Development**
- Prepare a report to OSSE leadership summarizing the findings, analysis, and recommendations for changes to the Capital Quality framework and its implementation.
 - Provide detailed guidance on implementation considerations associated with these recommendations, including potential next steps for modernization and stakeholder engagement.

DELIVERABLES

1. Stakeholder feedback report summarizing key insights and priorities.
2. Literature review report on early learning quality research, tools, and best practices.
3. Draft and final recommendations for changes to Capital Quality framework and implementation.
4. Proposed implementation plan and timeline.

These deliverables may be submitted to H&A as one or multiple reports/documents, in Microsoft Word or PowerPoint format, as agreed to by H&A, OSSE and the selected vendor.

DELIVERABLE TIMELINE

The project will be completed in phases over the course of seven months. Prospective vendors who do not believe it is possible to complete the scope of work as articulated within the timeline and budget provided are still encouraged to submit proposals that offer alternative approaches to achieving the overall goals of the project, as outlined above, with an adapted scope to fit within the timeline and budget available. The timeline may be modified based on the date of award and recommendations from the selected contractor.

Key milestones include:

- Kick-off meeting to review scope of work, including key deliverables and data collection methods (March 2025, within two weeks of contract award)
- Bi-weekly check-in meetings (March-September 2025)
- Data review and stakeholder feedback collection (March-June, 2025)
 - All data collection documents are to be reviewed by OSSE/DEL prior to use.
- Literature review completion (March-April, 2025)
- Recommendations development (May-July, 2025)
- Stakeholder engagement discussions (July 2025)
- Review of literature review and findings shared with H&A and OSSE for feedback and input (July-August, 2025)
- Present recommendations to H&A and OSSE leadership (September 2025)

BUDGET

The project budget will be determined based on the agreed-upon scope, timeline, resource requirements, and funding availability. An itemized budget will be developed by the consultant and reviewed for approval.

OSSE and H&A anticipate proposals in the range of \$150,000 to \$300,000. Proposals with budgets exceeding \$350,000 will not be considered. OSSE and H&A reserve the right to request modifications to a prospective vendor's proposed budget prior to confirming selection of a vendor.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **H&A** will administer the contract, facilitate collaboration between OSSE, external consultant and other stakeholders; share data and information about Capital Quality implementation with external consultant as requested; participate in feedback sessions as appropriate and monitor consultant's compliance with contract terms and scope of work;
- **OSSE/DEL** will oversee the project, provide access to relevant data, and facilitate engagement with key stakeholders.
- **External Consultant** will lead the analysis, stakeholder feedback collection, literature review, and development of recommendations.
- **OSSE and Stakeholders** will participate in feedback sessions and provide input on the recommendations for changes to Capital Quality framework and implementation.

This scope of work outlines the key steps and deliverables required for the development of an updated and improved Capital Quality framework to better support early learning quality in DC.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed and scored out of 100 points, as outlined below in Table 1. Proposals should describe the methodology and plans that the vendor will use to address the tasks below for:

- Reviewing Capital Quality and Implementation Data;
- Collecting feedback from internal and external stakeholders;
- Conducting the literature review, including the approach the vendor will take to identifying relevant examples in other states to inform DC's work;
- Developing recommendations for changes to the Capital Quality framework, implementation and associated policies and supports;
- Engaging with OSSE and, as appropriate, other stakeholders to iterate and refine recommendations; and
- Drafting and revising reports.

Proposals shall include:

- Draft budget;
- Timeline details and any modifications to the timeline proposed below;
- Staffing for this project, including the team, roles, and qualifications (with resumes);
- At least two examples of relevant similar projects completed by the vendor within the past five years, including references and contact information for clients on whose behalf work was conducted, and a description of the results of the project and how the client used the analysis developed. Examples do not need to be specific to Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, but should include engagements with state, local or federal government agencies; community-wide

collective impact initiatives or large philanthropic entities to support projects of similar complexity in the early childhood field involving literature and landscape review, stakeholder engagement, policy and program analysis, and development and refinement of recommendations. Experience highlighting stakeholder engagement from individuals who are multilingual is important, particularly in Spanish and Amharic in the context of DC. Prospective vendors should include a link to any published reports produced by example projects in their proposal or, if the reports are not available on the internet, provide a copy of such reports with the proposal.

Table 1: Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Points
Prior Experience	30
Project Budget	10
Qualifications of Proposed Staff	20
Quality of Planned Approach	40
Total	100

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- A project narrative that includes how the vendor will address and meet the requirements articulated in the governing scope of work. This narrative should include key staff and their roles on the project. The narrative should not exceed 30 single-spaced pages, using 11-point font.
- Resumes of all key staff and/or consultants must be included.
- A budget and budget narrative describing how funds will be allocated for this work. The budget narrative must clearly articulate how all costs were determined.
- As applicable, copies of reports produced for similar client projects shared as examples (with any proprietary client information redacted). Such reports are excluded from the narrative page count.
- All questions regarding the opportunity should be sent to pparker@erhurleyassoc.com.
- All submissions must be sent electronically to pparker@erhurleyassoc.com and must be received by **Feb. 14, 2025 at 5 p.m.**