



MECKLENBURG COUNTY
County Manager's Office

June 1, 2026

Dear Members of the House Oversight Committee,

Thank you for your leadership in attempting to improve North Carolina's child welfare system. The death of six-year-old Dominique Moody is a heartbreaking tragedy. As County Manager, hearing of the situation left me speechless. I will never understand how an adult can abuse a child.

As County Manager, when I learned of the situation, I immediately directed a comprehensive internal review to better understand the facts, identify any breakdowns in practice, policy, or decision-making, and determine what corrective actions might be necessary. Staff conducted a thorough examination to understand what occurred and, most importantly, what measures might be put in place to help ensure that a tragedy of this nature to the extent possible doesn't happen again. I also asked for an employee investigation conducted by HR for accountability and appropriate disciplinary actions. That information has been provided to the Committee. While we cannot change the outcome for Dominique, we have an obligation to learn from this case and strengthen the systems entrusted with protecting vulnerable children. That commitment remains my highest priority.

I want to assure this Committee that Mecklenburg County remains fully committed to working collaboratively with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, state leaders, and our community partners to improve our child welfare system. We welcome the partnership of accountability, transparency, and constructive recommendations that will help us better serve children and families. At the same time, as you are aware there is a criminal case pending and a court order regarding public disclosure of case specific information.

Our system is far from perfect, but we have greatly improved our practices from within and in a sustainable manner. Our effort to assess our practice and make improvements began well in advance of the state's review. My commitment to this work has been operationalized through the new fiscal year county budget by my recommendation to add several new DSS positions which recommendation is

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expected to be approved by my Board at our June 2 meeting. My Board recognizes the gravity of this work. The budget adds staff and support, as well as resiliency support for those on the front lines of this work whose job is to investigate the brutality experienced by children. This work is grueling and takes an emotional toll on the workers who daily have to confront the horrific conditions that some children face. While there were changes to the staff, the collective team remains dedicated to our vulnerable children.

Your letter included tough statements, but I understand the need for those words to be stated. I know it comes from a place of deep care for the vulnerable children of North Carolina, a sentiment that I likewise share. As I wrap up my first year as the Mecklenburg County Manager, I assure you it is my intent to implement changes that will have a positive impact on the process in the future. I cannot answer why some people do what they do and harm children. I can only try to make sure that Mecklenburg is prepared to respond appropriately in whatever the situation is. I commit to you that we will remain focused on that responsibility.

Please see attached the answers to your questions.

Sincerely,

Mike Bryant