The Association between Judy Center Services and Kindergarten Readiness













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The Association between Judy Center Services and Kindergarten Readiness

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MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Dear Colleagues, Community Leaders, and Families:

I am pleased to issue this report which includes data demonstrating the positive impact statewide efforts have had in helping young children enter school ready to learn. Through the Judith P. Hoyer Early Childhood and Education Enhancement Program, education and support services are available for children (birth through kindergarten) and their families who reside in Title I school districts across the state. Twenty-seven Judith P. Hoyer Family Learning Centers, also known as Judy Centers, and three satellite locations, in collaboration with a diverse group of agencies, governmental organizations and private providers have been instrumental in better preparing rising kindergartners for school.

A recent study examined whether students entering kindergarten who received Judy Center services were better prepared for school than students who did not. This Report reveals:

- Students who received Judy Center services scored higher on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) than students who did not receive Judy Center services.
- Students with special needs (i.e. special education, ELL, FARMS) that utilized Judy Center services scored higher on the KRA than students who did not.
- Judy Center special education students scored higher on the KRA Composite score than special education students who did not.

The investments from the Maryland State Legislature are palpable; and we are seeing improvements in the readiness of young learners entering school. Although we celebrate these successes, there is room for improvement. This report highlights the positive outcomes for the children using Judy Centers and also identifies opportunities to further improve readiness.

The lessons from this study will influence how we focus our future efforts and address the needs of young learners and their families. We look forward to supporting Maryland's children in achieving their highest potential.

Liecian M. Lowery

Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Schools

Introduction

Judy Centers

Judith P. Hoyer Family Learning Centers, also known as Judy Centers, serve all children birth through kindergarten who live in designated Title I school zones. There are twenty-seven Judy Centers and three satellites throughout Maryland serving fortyfour elementary school zones. Through collaboration with partners, each Judy Center maintains public prekindergarten and kindergarten, an Infants and Toddlers Program, preschool special education, private childcare providers, and a Family Support Center, as well as other community programs. Services are required to meet the full-day and year-round needs of children and families; family support and parenting, and the integration of early education services. Further, Judy Centers focus on early identification and intervention and on serving young children with disabilities; various health services are provided; professional development of staff; adult education and family literacy. All early education programs, including child care, Head Start, public prekindergarten, and kindergarten must be nationally or state accredited. The Judy Center Partnership plays a leadership role in the community.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)

The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) is conducted in the beginning of the kindergarten year and reflects school readiness based on the new curricular standards. The KRA replaces the previous school readiness assessment, the Maryland Model of School Readiness (MMSR). Comprised of a range of selected-response, performance-task, and observational-rubric items, readiness is measured in four domains—Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Social Foundations, and Physical Well-Being and Motor Development—as well as a combined, or Composite, score. In the four domains, students are rated as Demonstrating Readiness or Not Yet Demonstrating Readiness. For the Composite score, students are rated as Demonstrating Readiness, Approaching Readiness, or Emerging Readiness.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine whether entering kindergarteners who had received Judy Center services were better prepared for school compared to those who did not. Further, the study examines whether the Judy Center services ameliorate the school readiness gap for at-risk children.

Method

The examination between the two groups, representing kindergarten students, is limited to different early education experiences. One group represents those kindergarten students that accessed Judy Center services and experienced more integrated early learning experiences in the preschool years, were enrolled in programs of high quality, and had families who were more engaged in parenting and their children's learning. The second group represents those kindergarten students who did not have that experience. The study will examine the differences in their school readiness skills between students who did and did not access Judy Center services. In addition, this study will compare students in a set of schools with Judy Center access to all students in Maryland. We hypothesize that students who accessed Judy Center services prior to kindergarten entry performed better on the school readiness measure than those who did not access Judy Center services.

Measures

As described briefly above, the measure of school readiness in Maryland is the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA.) The KRA assesses student performances in four areas, or domains—Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Social Foundations, and Physical Well-Being and Motor Development. Within each of these domains are a set of strands. Within each strand is a set of standards, defined by an essential skill and knowledge statement.

Within the Language and Literacy domain, there are four strands—Reading, Speaking and Listening, Writing, and Language. Examples of standards include comprehending interactive read-alouds, demonstrating an understanding of phonemes, knowing letter-sound correspondence, and producing letter-like shapes.

Math consists of four strands—Counting and Cardinality, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Measurement and Data, and Geometry. Examples of standards in Mathematics include knowing number names, understanding addition, sorting objects, describing measurable attributes, and describing shapes.

Social Foundations consists of three strands—Social-Emotional, Approaches to Learning/Executive Functioning, and Social Studies. Examples of Social Foundations standards include recognizing and identifying emotions of self and others, demonstrating the ability to persist with a task, and demonstrating an understanding of rules and responsible behavior.

The Physical Well-Being and Motor Development domain includes two strands—Physical Education and Health. Examples of Physical Well-Being and Motor Development standards include demonstrating the ability to use large muscles to perform a variety of physical skills, and demonstrating personal health and hygiene skills. All KRA items were evaluated for their difficulty, discrimination (i.e. item-total correlation), and internal consistency. The internal structure of the KRA was examined using Cronbach's alpha (α), a common psychometric analytic procedure used to obtain an estimate of the reliability, or a measure of the extent to which the items on the KRA measure the same construct. Cronbach's α is a coefficient of reliability. It provides an internal consistency estimate based on the correlation between each test item with other test items, examining whether items test a single construct. Generally speaking, the alpha is high when the correlation between test items is high. **Table 1** shows that the correlations among KRA assessment items were strong. The alpha of .94 for the composite KRA score is considered to be in the "Excellent" range. The alphas for the domains ranged from .78 in Mathematics to .91 for Social Foundations, in the "Good" and "Excellent" ranges, respectively.

Domain	Cronbach's α	Internal
		Consistency
KRA Composite	.94	Excellent
Language and Literacy	.82	Good
Mathematics	.78	Good
Social Foundations	.91	Excellent
Physical Well-Being and Motor	.81	Good
Development		

Table 1. Internal Consistency of the KRA

Participants

KRA scores were examined for two groups of children. The first group accessed Judy Center services, the second group did not. This sample included 2,090 students who accessed Judy Center services (referred to as JC-1 children, or the treatment group), and 1,317 who did not (referred to as JC-0 children, or the control group). Students in this sample attended 39 schools and had equal access to 27 Judy Centers in 22 counties. These analyses did not include Judy Centers that were in their first year of operation. The KRA was administered in early fall of 2014, the kindergarten year. All other variables reflect activities or status in the year prior to kindergarten entry.

Table 2 shows the demographic profiles of the two groups and how they compare to Maryland's kindergarten population. There were no statistically significant differences in the number of boys and girls receiving and not receiving Judy Center services. In addition, the distribution of children across race and ethnicity categories was not associated with participation in Judy Center services. Children in the JC-1 sample were more likely to qualify for free and reduced meals than their JC-0 peers (76.7% vs. 59.0%, respectively). Receiving special education services was not related to

receiving Judy Center services. Similarly, being an English Language Learner (ELL) was not related to receiving Judy Center services. JC-0 children received statistically significantly different types of predominant prior care than their JC-1 peers. For example, 24.5% of JC-0 children had attended prekindergarten, as opposed to 75.6% of JC-1 children. Also, more JC-0 children had attended home/informal care (35.5%) than JC-1 children (6.4%).

Table 2. Demographics

Demographic Characteristic	JC-0 %	JC-1 %	x ² p- value ¹	All MD Kinder- garten Students		
Gender						
Male	53.2	50.1	.082	51.5		
Female	46.8	49.9		48.5		
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian/Alaska Native ¹	0.3	0.1		0.3		
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ²	0.7	0.2		0.2		
Asian	2.8	2.1	.102	6.0		
Black/African American	35.9	33.5		33.1		
White	30.0	33.9		36.4		
Hispanic/Latino	23.7	22.9		17.3		
Two or More Races (Non- Hispanic/Latino)	6.5	7.3		6.7		
Free and Reduced Priced Meals						
No	41.0	23.3	< .001	51.4		
Yes	59.0	76.7		48.6		
Special Education			•			
No	89.5	91.5	0.441	91.3		
Yes	10.4	8.5		8.7		
English Language Learner						
No	78.47	81.0	.078	83.5		
Yes	21.5	19.0		16.5		
Predominant Prior Care	Predominant Prior Care					
Head Start	8.7	10.4	< .001	5.7		
Prekindergarten	24.5	75.6		35.7		
Child Care Center	15.6	2.8		13.3		
Family Child Care	6.8	2.9		5.5		
Home/Informal Care	35.5	6.4		22.2		
Non-Public Nursery School	8.0	1.1		15.7		
Repeated Kindergarten ³	1.1	1.4		1.8		

 1 A *p*-value of less than .05 indicates a statistically significant finding.

 2 This race was not included in the χ^{2} calculation because there were fewer than 5 participants in these cells.

 3 This prior care category was not included in the χ^{2} calculation because it has not historically been considered a form of prior care.

Procedure

The analytic procedures were Chi squares, calculated to determine whether the KRA scores of children who accessed Judy Center Services differed significantly from the scores of children who did not access Judy Center services. Analyses were conducted in SAS 9.3 and Excel.

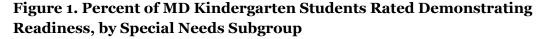
Findings

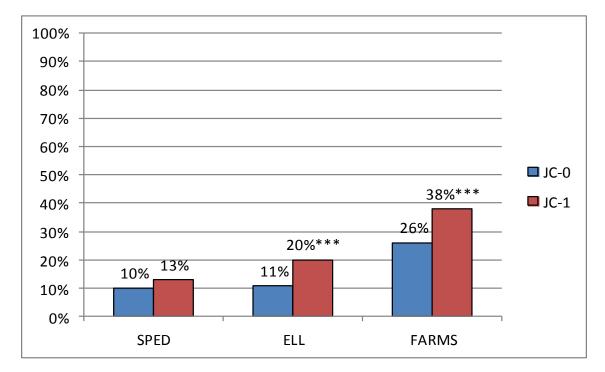
Kindergarten Readiness Results

As shown in **Table 3**, there were statistically significant differences in Language and Literacy scores by Judy Center experience, with a higher proportion of JC-1 children scoring in the Demonstrating range than JC-0 children (41.8% vs. 37.8%, respectively). Further, in the Social Foundations domain, nearly half (49.1%) of JC-1 children scored in the Demonstrating range, compared to 43.5% of the JC-0 children. JC-1 children were also more likely to score in the Demonstrating range than JC-0 children in the Physical Well-Being and Motor Development domain (56.6% and 45.0%, respectively). Finally, higher proportions of JC-1 children scored in both the Demonstrating and Approaching ranges in the Composite score compared to JC-0 children. Mathematics performance was also associated with Judy Center service receipt.

Domain	JC-0 (Control) n (%)	JC-1 (Treatment) n (%)	x2 <i>p</i> - value		
Language and Literacy					
Demonstrating	461 (37.8)	849 (41.8)	< .001		
Not Yet Demonstrating	760 (62.2)	1,183 (58.2)			
Mathematics					
Demonstrating	334 (27.0)	566 (27.6)	< .001		
Not Yet Demonstrating	901 (73.0)	1,487 (72.4)			
Social Foundations					
Demonstrating	543 (43.5)	1,008 (49.1)	< .001		
Not Yet Demonstrating	705 (56.5)	1,044 (50.9)			
Physical Well-Being and Motor Develo	pment				
Demonstrating	562 (45.0)	1,162 (56.6)	< .001		
Not Yet Demonstrating	687 (55.0)	892 (43.4)			
Composite Score					
Demonstrating	433 (35.7)	820 (40.8)	< .001		
Approaching	464 (38.3)	844 (42.0)			
Emerging	316 (26.1)	346 (17.2)			

Figure 1 describes the KRA performance of kindergarten students who had special needs defined as being in either of the three groups: special education services, services for English Language Learners (ELL), and Free and Reduced Priced Meals (FARMS), a proxy for income. There was no difference in KRA performance for students who accessed special education services among those who did and did not access Judy Center services. ELL students who accessed Judy Center services were more likely to be rated Demonstrating Readiness than those who did not access Judy Center services were more likely to be rated Demonstrating Readiness than those who did not access than those who did not access Judy Center services were more likely to be rated Demonstrating Readiness than those who did not access Judy Center services were more likely to be rated Demonstrating Readiness than those who did not access tha the did not access than those who did not access than those





***p < .0001

As seen in **Figure 2**, students in Judy Centers were more likely to have one or more special needs (special education, ELL, FARMS) than the State at large. Further, JC-1 students were more likely than JC-0 students to have one or more special needs. About two-thirds of JC-0 students had one or more special needs, while 81% of JC-1 students had one or more special needs. In comparison, in Maryland, only 46% of students had one or more special needs.

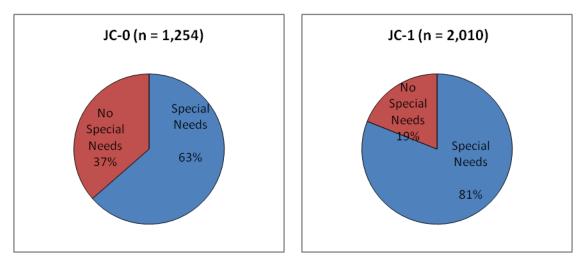


Figure 2. Percent of Kindergarten Students with One or More Special Needs

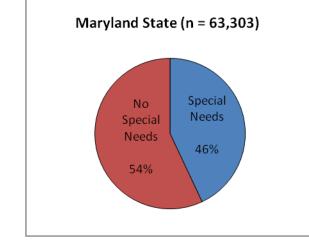


Table 4 presents a summary of school readiness of students who did and did not have one of the three special needs measured (i.e. special education, ELL, FARMS) within the Judy Center sample, as well as at the State level. When considering the entire kindergarten population in Maryland, 59% of those who did not have special needs demonstrated readiness, compared to 32% of those who did have special needs. Examining all kindergartners who had access to the 27 Judy Centers (regardless of whether they actually accessed those services), 56% of those who did not have special needs demonstrated readiness on the KRA, as compared to 33% of those who did have special needs needs.

Finally, **Table 4** presents the proportion of students who demonstrated readiness by special need status for those who accessed Judy Center services and those who did not. Fifty-three percent of JC-0 students who did not have special needs demonstrated readiness compared to 25% of those who did have special needs. Fifty-nine percent of those who used special services demonstrated readiness compared to 37% who did receive special services.

Table 3. Domain and Composite Scores by Judy Center Experience

There are additional comparisons of interest here. Of note is that students accessing Judy Center services outperformed those who did not, regardless of whether they had special needs. For example, 37% of JC-1 students with special needs demonstrated readiness, compared to 25% of JC-0 students with special needs. Maryland students who had special needs were less likely to demonstrate readiness than JC-1 students, but more likely than JC-0 students (32% versus 37% and 25%, respectively).

		and State 67,092)	(JC-	dy Center -0 & JC-1) = 3,407)		JC-0 = 1,317)		JC-1 = 2,090)
	% of State Sam- ple	% Demon- strating Readiness	% of JC Sam- ple	% Demon- strating Readiness	% of JC-0 Sam- ple	% Demon- strating Readiness	% of JC-1 Sam- ple	% Demon- strating Readiness
No Special Needs	43%	59%	26%	56%	36 % ³	54%	19% ³	59%
Special Needs	57%	32%	74%	33%	64% ³	25%	81 % ³	37%
Over- all Per- cent	100%	47%	100%	39%	100%	36%	100%	41%

Table 4. Students Receiving Special Services as a Proportion of the Total

Population and KRA Composite Results

 3 A χ^{2} test was conducted comparing the numbers of JC-0 and JC-1 students with and without special needs. The resulting *p*-value was smaller than .001.

Between 8 (JC-1) and 10% (JC-0) of children in this sample received special education services. Among non-special education students, those who accessed Judy Center services fared better than their non-Judy Center peers (see **Table 5**). For special education students, there was a 3 percentage point difference in Composite scores with more JC-1 students scoring in the Demonstrating Readiness range than JC-0 students. Among non-special education students, there was a 6 percentage point difference

between JC-0 and JC-1 students' Composite scores with JC-1 students scoring in the Demonstrating Readiness range than JC-0 students.

	Composite Special Education Non-Special Education		
JC-0	10	38	
JC-1	13	44	
Difference	+3	+6	

Table 5. Percent of Special Education and Non-Special Education StudentsRated as Demonstrating Readiness, by Prior Judy Center Service Receipt4

Table 6 highlights the performance gap between special education and nonspecial education students in the JC-0 and JC-1 samples. Among JC-0 students, there was a 28 percentage point gap when comparing special education and non-special education students. Among JC-1 students, there was a 31 percentage point gap when comparing special education and non-special education students. While the JC-1 group

	Special Education	Non-Special Education	Gap
JC-0	10	38	28
JC-1	13	44	31

consistently outperformed the JC-0 group, being a JC-1 student was associated with a larger increase in score for non-special education students than special education students.

Table 6. Percent of Special Education and Non-Special Education StudentsRated as Demonstrating Readiness, by Prior Judy Center Service Receipt4

Nineteen percent of JC-0 students were ELLs, and 21% of JC-1 students were ELLs. **Table** 7 presents the difference in the proportion of JC-0 and JC-1 ELL and non-ELL students scoring in the Demonstrating Readiness range. This indicates that JC-1 ELL students were consistently more likely to score in the Demonstrating Readiness range than JC-0 ELL students.

	Composite			
	ELL Non-ELL			
JC-0	11	41		
JC-1	20	46		
Difference	+9	+5		

Table 7. Percent of English Language Learner and Non-English Language Learner Students Rated as Demonstrating Readiness, by Prior Judy Center Service Receipt

Table 8 shows that the gap between the proportion of ELL and non-ELL students scoring in the Demonstrating Readiness range is smaller among JC-1 students. There is a gap of 26 percentage points among JC-1 students, compared to a gap of 30 percentage points among JC-0 students. This indicates that the JC-1 group had a narrower gap

	ELL	Non-ELL	Gap
JC-0	11	41	30
JC-1	20	46	26

between the ELL and non-ELL students than JC-o students.

Table 8. Percent of English Language Learner and Non-English Language Learner Students Rated as Demonstrating Readiness, by Prior Judy Center Service Receipt⁴

As with ELLs, there is a large difference in the proportion of FARMS students scoring in the Demonstrating range by JC status (**Table 9**). The difference for JC-1 students is

12%. A smaller difference in proportions is evident among the non-FARMS students (1 percentage point). This indicates that, overall, the JC-1 group outperformed the JC-0 group.

	Composite		
	FARMS	Non-FARMS	
JC-0	26	50	
JC-1	38	51	
Difference	+12	+1	

Table 9. Percent of Students Qualified for Free and Reduced Meals and those Not Qualified Rated as Demonstrating Readiness, by Prior Judy Center Services

	FARMS	Non-FARMS	Gap
JC-0	26	50	24
JC-1	38	51	13

Table 10 presents the difference between the proportion of FARMS and non-FARMS. students scoring in the Demonstrating Readiness range by JC status. In both JC groups, non-FARMS students were more likely to score in the Demonstrating Readiness range, but that gap was smaller among JC-1 students than it was for JC-0 students.

Table 10. Percent of Special Education and Non-Special Education StudentsRated as Demonstrating Readiness, by Prior Judy Center Service Receipt4

Summary and Discussion

One of the first findings of this study is that there was a higher proportion of FARMS students in the JC-1 sample than in either the JC-0 sample or Maryland population. The key take-away message from this is that the JC-1 sample presents a solid target group for further intervention. Additional efforts could be made to direct resources toward engaging this subgroup with additional Judy Center services.

A second key finding is that JC-1 students scored higher on the KRA than JC-0 students. Primarily, it appears that Judy Center services have a positive relationship with students' KRA performance. As such, encouraging those students who have special needs to access Judy Center services in the year prior to kindergarten could affect their KRA performance. Further, expanding Judy Center implementation to areas that are in need of such services could further improve KRA performance.

This study examined the proportion of kindergarten students who had one or more special needs (i.e. special education, ELL, FARMS). The full Judy Center sample had a greater proportion of students with special needs than Maryland overall. This suggests that the current Judy Centers are well-placed to address the needs of Maryland's neediest children and families. In addition, JC-1 students with special needs out-performed JC-0 students with special needs on the KRA. This points toward the Judy Centers' success at addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged students.

With regards to special education, this study found that, first, there is a very low prevalence of kindergartners receiving special education services (between 8 and 10%). Also, JC-1 special education students scored higher on the KRA Composite score than JC-0 special education students, but not on the Mathematics or Language and Literacy domains. This suggests that students with disabilities may need more than a single year of Judy Center services to address their needs. ELL students' scores, on the other hand, demonstrated that accessing Judy Center services was associated with demonstrating readiness. This finding indicates that Judy Center services are affecting outcomes quickly and effectively for ELL students. Finally, there were very notable differences between JC-0 and JC-1 scores among FARMS students, with JC-1 FARMS students regularly out-performing the JC-0 FARMS students. This suggests that Judy Center services are positively associated with students' performance and readiness.

Judy Center Locations

Allegany County **Beall Elementary** 3 College Avenue Frostburg 21532

South Penn Elementary 500 East Second St. Cumberland, MD 21502

Anne Arundel Hilltop Elementary 415 Melrose Avenue Glen Burnie 21061

Baltimore City Moravia Park Elementary/Middle 6201 Frankford Avenue Baltimore 21206

John Eager Howard Elementary 2011 Linden Avenue Baltimore 21217

Furman L. Templeton Prep Acad- Greensboro Elementary emy (satellite) 1200 N. Pennsylvania Ave. Baltimore 21217

The Historic Samuel Coleridge Taylor Elementary (satellite) 507 W. Preston Street Baltimore 21201

Comm. John Rodgers Elementary 100 N. Chester Street Baltimore 21231

Liberty Elementary 3901 Maine Avenue Baltimore 21207

Arundel Elementary/Middle 2400 Round Road Baltimore 21225

Baltimore County Campfield Early Childhood Ctr. 6834 Alter Street Baltimore 21207

Calvert County Patuxent Elementary 35 Appeal Lane Lusby 20657

Caroline County Federalsburg Judy Center 323 S. University Avenue Federalsburg 21632

Federalsburg Elementary University & Academy Avenues Federalsburg 21632

625 Main Street Greensboro 21639

Carroll County **Robert Moton Elementary** 1413 Washington Road Westminster 21157

Taneytown Elementary 100 Kings Drive Taneytown 21787

Cranberry Station Elementary 505 North Center Street Westminster 21157

Elmer A. Wolfe Elementary 119 North Main Street Union Bridge 21791

Cecil County Holly Hall Elementary 233 White Hall Rd. Elkton 21921

Gilpin Manor Elementary 203 Newark Avenue Elkton 21921

Family Education Center 200 Road B Hollingsworth Manor Elkton 21921

Charles County Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary 820 Stone Avenue Waldorf 20602

C. Paul Barnhart Elementary 4800 Lancaster Circle Waldorf 20603

Eva Turner Elementary 1000 Bannister Circle Waldorf 20602

Dorchester County The Judy Center 1405 Glasgow Street Cambridge 21613

Sandy Hill Elementary 1503 Glasgow Street Cambridge 21613

Frederick County Waverley Elementary 201Waverley Drive Frederick 21702

Hillcrest Elementary 1285 Hillcrest Drive Frederick 21703

Lincoln Elementary 200 Madison Street Frederick 21701

<u>Garrett County</u> Garrett County Judy Center Partnership 41 Highview Drive Oakland 21550

Yough Glades Elementary 70 Wolf Acres Drive Oakland 21550

Friendsville Elementary 841 First Avenue Friendsville, MD 21631

Grantsville Elementary 120 Grant Street Grantsville 21536

Crellin Elementary 115 Kendall Drive Crellin 21550

Broad Ford Elementary 607 Harvey Winters Road Oakland 21550

Harford County Magnolia Elementary 901 Trimble Road Joppa 21085

Howard County Cradlerock Elementary 6700 Cradlerock Way Columbia 21045 <u>Kent County</u> Henry Highland Garnett Elem. 320 Calvert Street Chestertown 21620

<u>Montgomery County</u> Rolling Terrace Elementary 705 Bayfield Street Takoma Park 20912

Summit Hall Elementary 101 West Deer Park Road Gaithersburg 20877

Washington Grove Elementary 8712 Oakmont Street Gaithersburg 20877

<u>Prince George's County</u> Judy Hoyer Family Learning Ctr. 8908 Riggs Road Adelphi 20783

Cool Spring Elementary School 8910 Riggs Road Adelphi 20783

Carmody Hills Elementary (satellite) 401 Jadeleaf Avenue Capitol Heights 20743

Queen Anne's County Sudlersville Elementary 300 S. Church Street Sudlersville 21668

<u>Somerset County</u> Princess Anne Elementary 11576 Lankford Street Princess Anne 21853

<u>St. Mary's County</u> Green Holly Elementary 46060 Millstone Landing Lexington Park 20653 George Washington Carver Elementary 46155 Carver School Blvd. Great Mills 20634

<u>Talbot County</u> Easton Elementary 305 Glenwood Avenue Easton 21601

Washington County Bester Elementary 385 Mill Street Hagerstown 21740

Winter Street Elementary 59 Winter Street Hagerstown 21740

<u>Wicomico County</u> Wicomico Early Learning Center 1101 Robert Street Salisbury 21804

Pemberton Elementary 1300 Pemberton Drive Salisbury 21804

Beaver Run Elementary 31481 Old Ocean City Road Salisbury 21804

Worcester County Snow Hill Elementary 515 Coulbourne Lane Snow Hill 21863

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