

House Bill 516

Workgroup to Study the Implementation of Universal Access to Prekindergarten for 4-Year-Olds

Meeting Notes: July 26, 2017

Nancy S. Grasmick State Education Building
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201

Purpose: House Bill 516 “Workgroup to Study the Implementation of Universal Access to Prekindergarten for 4-Year-Olds,” was passed by both chambers and enacted under Article II, Section 17(b) of the Maryland Constitution – Chapter 25. The workgroup will “study and make recommendations regarding certain matters; requiring the Workgroup to report its findings and recommendations to a certain Commission) on Innovation and Excellence in Education) on or before September 1, 2017.”

Meeting Outcomes:

Build whole group consensus on workgroup recommendations to include in report

Meeting Notes:

Members in attendance: Elizabeth Kelley (Chair), Honorable Eric Ebersole, Stacey Henson, Christina Peusch, Jackie Grant, Clinton MacSherry, Sharon Vance, Steven Hicks, Crystal Barksdale, Honorable Vanessa Atterbary, Ginny Simoneau, Senator Jim Rosapepe, Michelle Dean, William Dixon, Simon Workman, Kathy Emby, Shari Sierra, Karen Karten, Flora Gee, Kelly Hall, Rachel London, Esq., Tracy Jost, Toby Harkleroad,

Members not in attendance: Becky Yackley, Elise Burgess, Honorable William Ferguson, Simeon Russell

Welcome and Introductions by Workgroup Chair

Elizabeth Kelley, Acting Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Early Childhood Development, welcomed the workgroup. The Workgroup members introduced themselves. Ms. Kelley provided an overview of the agenda and meeting outcomes for the day.

Review Notes

The meeting notes from July 10th were accepted with the change that Simon Workman is not a PhD

Review of Governance and Funding Model Options

Elizabeth Kelley facilitated a discussion of the 4 proposed funding model options (see attached). Ms. Kelley provided an overview of the options and considerations. The workgroup members asked questions and offered additional considerations for each model.

Option 1

Questions and Considerations:

If the School system distributes the funds to community-based programs, then who determines the number of Pre-K slots allotted to community based programs and the number of slots the school system will retain?

A suggestion was made to use the MOU as a vehicle to set a minimum percentage of slots that must go to community-based classrooms.

Simon workman interjected that there are some States which contract a certain number of slots to community based programs.

If the school system hires and pays the salary and fringe benefits for the Lead Teacher placed in a community based program, then who assumes liability for the Teacher as he/she is technically an employee of the school system, but works in the community-based site?

Will the school system provide a substitute teacher if the teacher is absent? (No, in current PDG example)

Some workgroup members shared that their district considered a model similar to this in the past, but decided against it because of the potential liability.

How would this model impact the community-based programs' budget since that largest part of their budget (teacher salary and benefits) would no longer an issue? Will community-based programs get a reduced per student amount?

Community program workgroup members reiterated the other costs outside of teacher salary that are required such as rent, utilities, insurance, fringe benefits for non PreK staff, lunch, field trips, quality enhancements, accreditation fees, comprehensive services (screenings), program evaluation, and some supplies and consumables.

Who provides instructional support, school system instructional support staff or other? Does the school system have the capacity (staff) to provide instructional support to community-based classrooms?

A question was asked regarding capital improvements and construction costs. Workgroup members reiterated that these funds will not include capital improvements.

Senator Jim Rosapepe added although it is not a topic for the charge of this group, this is a topic that should be revisited at a later time as it will have impact in the future.

Option 2

Questions and Considerations:

Some Workgroup members asked questions about responsibility and liability for this model. Their questions included: Would the ECAC members be legally responsible? Do they have a board? Can they be sued?

It was stated that each ECAC is structured and operates differently; some through the local government, others through the school system, and some others operate through a combination.

How are ECAC's currently appointed or assigned?

Some workgroup members suggested using the Resource Centers instead of using the ECAC

A suggestion was made that if an Intermediary (such as an ECAC) is used, then it should be flexible and allow for the unique circumstances of each jurisdiction

A suggestion was made to create some other governing body and not use an ECAC or Resource Center at all

Option 3

Questions and Considerations:

Ms. Kelley explained that this model is currently the way that the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) is issued.

Workgroup members expressed concerns about consistency in quality and monitoring for all PreK programs. There needs to be consistency in program quality across school system and community-based programs.

A suggestion was made to ensure a percentage of set aside funds for community-based programs that will be distributed to community-based programs by MSDE.

Option 4

Questions and Considerations:

MSDE should provide oversight for all PreKindergarten

Concerns were expressed about Pre-K funds remaining grants. It was suggested that the initial roll out can begin as grant/RFP process (i.e. years 1 and 2), but will eventually phase it out.

Workgroup members reiterated the point that phase-in is key

Other workgroup members suggested that using the word “grant” can make it appear to be optional and we do not want jurisdictions’ to think that participating is optional; while still recognizing that the capacity of local school systems to scale up varies tremendously.

The question was raised about setting a possible legislative mandatory threshold for participation. It was noted that Kirwan will mandate that Pre-K be accessible for all

Workgroup members noted that it is important to ensure that PreK is universal and presenting it as “optional’ would not achieve this.

Workgroup members raised questions about mandatory set-asides for community-based programs. A point was raised about all jurisdictions not having community-based programs. It was then clarified that the set aside would only apply to the extent that there is capacity. After which, another workgroup member suggested that the percentage be set by jurisdiction (per local data) instead of a blanket percentage.

After discussion of each model that workgroup participants were asked to identify governance structure and funding model they thought would work best.

After discussing the results of the participants’ decisions and continuing to clarify certain considerations, the workgroup agreed that MSDE should have oversight and provide guidance on establishing a mixed

delivery system, collaboration between the local school system and community-based programs should be an important component, the MOU should be used as a vehicle to ensure collaboration, there should be a phased roll-out that is flexible, and the definition of high quality be accepted with a few clarifications to address the length of the instructional day and a more detailed explanation of comprehensive services.

The group was also reminded to not forget family child care homes and considerations such as a hub model or even the Judy Centers facilitating the hub for family child care homes to participate.

Build Whole Group Consensus on the Remaining Recommendations to include in the Report

Judy Walker led a discussion on the other recommendations to include in the report, per the statement of work. Workgroup members suggested using funds for children with special needs, using subsidy funds to support wrap around care, and use of Title I funds per ESSA, opportunities to partner with Head Start

Members of the Head Start community addressed the group with updates in reference to the potential to partner with Head Start:

-All Head Start programs must be full-day by 2021

-50% of Head Start programs must be full-day by 2018

-Considerations for 3 year-olds who age out of Early Head Start at age 3, but are not yet eligible to participate in a Prekindergarten program for 4-year-olds.

Delegate Atterbeary reminded the group of the Kirwan Commission's charge and focus of this group to address Universal PreK for 4-year-olds

Delegate Ebersole reminded the group that the Kirwan Commission will ultimately make the decisions

Upon conclusion of this discussion, Judy Walker informed the group that a draft of the report would be distributed for review and comment the week of July 31st and the response time would be relatively quick due to the MSDE internal review process before the report can be submitted to the Commission by the September 1st deadline.

Adjournment

Ms. Kelley announced this is the last workgroup meeting and thanked the members for their participation.