

## Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge Grant – Year 4, Third Quarter Update



### Local Early Childhood Councils - Project 1

#### Key Achievements –

- All local jurisdictions have active Early Childhood Advisory Councils (ECACs) with memberships (to the extent possible) that mirrors the Governor’s State Early Childhood Advisory Council and includes relevant local early childhood stakeholders. Membership includes the local Superintendent of Schools, local government representative(s), representatives of local education agencies’ early childhood general and special education (Infants & Toddlers Program and Preschool Special Education), Head Start, family and center-based child care programs, the child care resource and referral agencies, the Judy Center Partnerships, local libraries, family support centers, family involvement providers, local departments of social services, child care licensing, early childhood non-profit agencies, and partners that are particular to the local jurisdiction.
- Each Local ECAC created an infrastructure to ensure collaboration and coordination at the local level to oversee the initiatives and reforms of the Race To The Top Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTT ELC) under the advice of the State Early Child Advisory Council and includes, but is not limited to, other projects within the RTT ELC Grant (i.e. MD EXCELS, Judy Centers, Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning, Reach Out and Read, Raising a Reader, Learning Parties, other early literacy projects, and Family Engagement)

#### Summary of Activities –

- Each local council has, or will soon, complete the activities the proposed in their RTT ELC Implementation Grants according to their specific target populations  
[http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child\\_care/docs/LECACpartneroverview\\_Sep2014.pdf](http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/docs/LECACpartneroverview_Sep2014.pdf)

#### Improved School Readiness –

- Presentations on the KRA results and use of the data are currently being conducted for Local ECACs. Each Local ECAC is studying their KRA results and strategically designing next steps towards closing the achievement gap.
- Ready at Five KRA Data <http://www.readyatfive.org/school-readiness-data/jurisdictional-readiness-data-2015.html>

### Maryland EXCELS - Project 2

#### Key Achievements –

- Participation in the Quality Rating and Improvement System, Maryland EXCELS, continues to increase with the additional of 33 Public PreKindergarten programs, and additional child care providers serving high-needs children. There are 5,238 programs participating in the QRIS, representing 55% of all licensed child care centers and registered family child care homes.

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- Participation in the QRIS requires programs to achieve and publish a quality rating within 12 months of acceptance. Published programs must renew and republish a quality rating every 12 months to remain a participant. During the first two years of full implementation of Maryland EXCELS, there was a number of programs whose participation expired due to not publishing a rating, or not renewing a published rating. A number of those expired programs were serving Child Care Subsidy families. To allow additional time for expired programs to renew their participation, Maryland EXCELS offered targeted support through the Quality Assurance staff and the Resource and Referral Center staff. Over 1,200 programs were moved out of expired status during August and September, 2015.
- Tiered Reimbursement/Quality Differential Payments – there are 305 providers and programs with published quality ratings of Level 3, 4, or 5 who are eligible for differential reimbursement payments for Child Care Subsidy, ranging from 10% to 44% depending upon the age of the child, the program type, and the published quality rating.
- The requirement for Child Care Subsidy providers to participate in Maryland EXCELS QRIS became effective on June 29, 2015. After nearly two years of outreach and support to programs and providers, there were 150-180 providers who had not submitted their application to participate by the deadline, out of the approximately 2,800 providers who were paid Subsidy reimbursement. Any provider may participate in the QRIS at any time, and providers continue to enroll after the deadline. Providers whose participation status had expired, due to not publishing a rating within 12 months, or not republishing a rating before the published expiration date, were provided additional time to log in to their account and publish a rating to renew their QRIS participation.

### Summary of Activities –

- Outreach and support continues to be provided through the network of Quality Assurance Specialists, who hold regional sessions and workgroup meetings to assist providers with Maryland EXCELS. Collaboration with the Child Care Licensing branch was strengthened during this period to ensure that communication to newly licensed programs and to prospective licensees includes the requirement for participation in the QRIS in order to accept Child Care Subsidy reimbursement. Continued collaboration with the Child Care Subsidy branch to inform families and providers of the requirement to choose a QRIS participating program resulted in an informational flyer to be inserted in every mailing to Subsidy providers and families throughout the coming year.

### Improved School Readiness –

- When the attendance reporting system for child care reaches full implementation, students will be tracked from their child care placement(s) to their kindergarten placement and their KRA assessment. This data will yield the link between program quality and student readiness.

### **Coaching and Mentoring – Project 3**

#### ***Breakthrough Centers***

##### Key Achievements –

- There were 217 child care providers/programs that were working with the Child Care Resource Centers (CCRCs) that are enrolled in Maryland EXCELS. Over 30% of which were able to achieve a Level 1 Rating in Maryland EXCELS. The providers and programs are continuing to move to higher levels with their knowledge base.
- Over 35% of the providers and programs have considered Accreditation options since they realize the connection between Maryland EXCELS and the Maryland Accreditation Program.

##### Summary of Activities –

- Childcare providers received technical assistance by attending Maryland EXCELS Program Standards Support Groups. The support groups were held at the regional resource centers as often as weekly group sessions.
- Many of the support groups provided computer literacy training, reviewing and uploading documents, and explaining the importance of the Environment Rating Scales.
- The childcare providers that were interested in Accreditation were advised to attend the orientation to learn the benefits of this process. They also learned how Maryland EXCELS and the Maryland Program Accreditation works hand in hand while utilizing much of the same documentation.
- In 2015, the Centers provided comprehensive technical assistance and capacity building to approximately 60 Child Care Programs and 157 Family Child Care Providers that reside in 116 Maryland State Department of Education Title I Schools catchment areas.
- Ultimately, the goal by December 31, 2015 is to reach 235 programs. That goal is nearly met with 217 programs having received services and are in enrolled in EXCELS.

##### Improved School Readiness –

- When the attendance system is fully implemented, MSDE will track programs in EXCELS, and their students' performance on the KRA.

#### ***Community Hubs***

##### Key Achievements –

- Two Community Hubs were created under the ELC grant, both located in Baltimore City. Each Community Hub facilitates the transition for each child to a Head Start program when the child turns three years old.
- Community Outreach Specialists (CCOS) have worked with over 55 child care providers by providing training and technical assistance in the Park Heights and Cherry Hill communities to increase their participation in the EXCELS program. By June 30, 2015,

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over 20 providers were registered at a Level 1 and an additional 10 providers at a Level 2.

### Summary of Activities –

- The Transition Specialist worked to develop contacts and relationships with the public schools as well as community agencies to smooth transitions for families with children entering Head Start, community preschool programs, and Pre-K.
- Hubs worked hand in hand with Early Head Start programs targeting pregnant women, infants and toddlers and their families. Supports were provided through referrals to various resources in the community, sharing parent education opportunities, and offering child development information through home visiting services.

### Improved School Readiness –

- School readiness was improved through working with families and service providers to ensure smooth transitions for those children turning three and transitioning to Head Start programs or community programs as well as those children entering public and private Pre-K programs.

### ***Preschool for All***

This project is closed, and the participating community based PreK programs were transferred to the federal Preschool Development Grant beginning July 1, 2015.

### ***Judy Center Satellites***

#### Key Achievements –

- The two additional Judy Centers located at Arundel ES and Liberty ES in Baltimore City became operational on time and as planned and are part of a public-private partnership with the Baltimore Community Foundation (BCF). BCF continues to fund Judy Centers in Baltimore City, adding 5 more in FY 2016.

#### Summary of Activities –

- Since this was the initial year of start-up, the Liberty and Arundel Judy Center have worked to address the needs of the community while also building and strengthening partnerships with existing providers. The Arundel Judy Center has been established at the Arundel Elementary School. Through a highly operational office/resource center for staff and families, they have secured 13 active partnerships with Baltimore City organizations to bring services and information to Judy Center families. The Liberty Judy Center, in response to community needs, established the *Judy Cares* program for early childhood counseling services and hosted parent workshop sessions with topics surrounding social/personal development.

#### Improved School Readiness –

- Kindergarteners in the elementary schools where each Judy Center is located participate in the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). In a 2015 study, a comparison was made on whether entering kindergarteners who had received Judy Center services were better prepared for school compared to those who did not. The study suggests that Judy Center services are positively associated with students' readiness.

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### *Making Access Happen (MAH)*

#### Key Achievements –

- Core teams of local early childhood staff from across the twenty-four local school systems, the Maryland School for the Blind and the Maryland School for the Deaf participated in regional 2-day professional development institutes focusing on reflective coaching as an adult learning strategy for successfully supporting the participation of young children with disabilities, ages 3 to kindergarten (includes 5 year-old not in their kindergarten year), in inclusive early childhood settings.
- Through local mini-grants supported by RTTT-ELCG funding, a total of 166 local program staff were subsequently trained as reflective coaches by the core teams who had participated in the 2-day regional institutes.
- Completion of an online MAH “toolkit” for reflective coaches to access as a resource will be launched in fall 2015. The toolkit includes video clips from local coaching sessions demonstrating best practices, related resources developed by participating local programs, and professional development materials developed by the MAH leadership team for use by local coaches.
- Conducting of the first evidence-based practices institute during August 2015, to be implemented by trained reflective coaches (reflective coaching is the strategy for implementing evidence-based practices)

#### Summary of Activities –

- The MAH team, comprised of JHU/SOE and MSDE staff, holds monthly leadership meetings to review the status of local program implementation of the reflective coaching model approach, based on the work of Sheldon and Rush. The team addresses challenges faced by local implementation teams and jointly develops strategies to address these. Based on the findings of local needs assessments completed prior to implementation, each local implementation team has been focusing on one or more program areas that are critical for successful inclusion of preschool children with disabilities, for example, transitions across programs and settings; continuity of intervention/instructional strategies between programs and the home; fostering positive social-emotional behaviors and interpersonal relationships (foundational to school-readiness for kindergarten).

#### Improved School Readiness –

- Least Restrictive Environment data available from the two most recent years of statewide reporting show that the percentage of preschool children participating in inclusive early childhood settings has increased. These data are collected annually in October: October 2013/October 2014: 3 year-olds, 35.43% to 38.79%; 4 year-olds, 49.13% to 51.74%; 5 year-olds, 63.75%/66.72%. Particularly for 3 year-olds this increase is significant. Increased access to general education early childhood programs, curricula and instruction is the first critical step towards narrowing the school readiness gap for children with disabilities.

## Promoting Use of Early Learning Standards- Project 4

### **PEEP**

#### Key Achievements –

- The first year of full scale implementation of the PEEP STEM curriculum and data collection took place in the 2014-2015 school year and concluded with post study data collection in June of 2015. Assessment and implementation data will be analyzed over the next few months. The second year of full scale implementation and data collection begins in October 2015. An additional 58 early childhood programs have signed up to participate in the professional development for PEEP. Twenty-four of these programs will participate in the research component on the effectiveness of PEEP over the next year. Professional development will be provided to participants on October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of 2015.

#### Summary of Activities –

- The second year of full scale implementation will kick-off with two days of professional development focused on science and *PEEP* on October 12 and 13, 2015. Teachers will then implement the six PEEP units over the next six months and facilitate children's science explorations with coaching support from their administrator.

#### Improved School Readiness –

- As part of this statewide early childhood STEM initiative, an evaluation is being conducted by the MSDE, Division of Early Childhood Development, to examine how the intentional implementation of *PEEP* supports science teaching and learning across the state, and reinforces practices outlined in the STEM guidelines. The evaluation of PEEP will allow us to assess the efficacy and impact of intentional science curriculum implementation on the development of scientific thinking during the preschool years. We will also utilize the new state Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) and follow our PEEP children and comparison group children (those children in classrooms that did not implement the curriculum) into Kindergarten to examine differences in kindergarten readiness.

### **Guide to Pedagogy**

#### Key Achievements –

- The Guide is being disseminated statewide, and is available online. A training module is being developed to introduce the guide to educators.
- Approved trainers have been given a hard copy of the guide to assist them in the development of training that includes information from the Guide.

#### Improved School Readiness –

- The information provided in the guide will help providers improve their quality of instruction, and assist trainers in developing high quality trainings materials.

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### VIOLETS

#### Key Achievements –

- The Vocabulary Improvement and Oral Language Enrichment Through Stories (VIOLETS) Program was successfully implemented in 71 pre-selected licensed child care and Head Start programs with a significant number of English Language Learners (ELL) and/or with children who have low expressive language skills in SY 2014-15, to reach the overall goal of implementing VIOLETS in 150 classrooms.
- The initial selection of classrooms/programs was focused in the Baltimore City and Prince George's County Title 1 school communities. The final make-up of the 71 programs (in SY 2014-15) included nine (9) programs in Breakthrough school communities in Prince George's County and fifteen (15) in Baltimore City. The remaining forty-seven (47) programs were in Title I school communities in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Harford, Montgomery, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties. Thirty-three (33) classrooms were Head Start programs, thirty-six (36) child care centers and two (2) family child care homes.

#### Summary of Activities –

- Two full days of professional development covering the VIOLETS research, curriculum contents, implementation strategies, and paired sharing were convened and lead by VIOLETS certified trainers.
- Twenty-four coaches provided coaching visits to implementing teachers providing them with the support they need to implement VIOLETS with fidelity, validity and reliability.
- Scripts and materials were developed for four additional books that were made available to programs that successfully and quickly complete the 12 Read Alouds in the VIOLETS Tote. New VIOLETS scripts were created for *How A Seed Grows* by Helene Jordan, *Whistle for Willie* by Ezra Jack Keats, *Over In the Meadow* by Olive Wadsworth, and *Bluebird* by Bob Staake. Additional sets of books were provided to 59 implementing teachers.
- A Members Only portal on Ready At Five's website – [www.readyatfive](http://www.readyatfive) – continues to be available to implementing teachers to post Extension Activities submitted by implementing teachers. The goal of the Extension Activities portal is to provide teachers implementing VIOLETS with opportunities to enrich the Read Alouds with suggestions from their colleagues. Additionally, this technique was created to extend the learning of VIOLETS into other learning centers and other language arts activities from their colleagues. Additionally, this technique was created to extend the learning of VIOLETS into other learning centers and other language arts activities. Extension Activities are posted by book title and available to implementing teachers via password. All VIOLETS implementing teachers and coaches have been invited to participate in a moderated online discussion forum to ask questions, share thoughts and ideas, and provide support to other VIOLETS teachers.

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- A newsletter, Dear VIOLET, was launched and sent to all VIOLETS implementing teachers, directors, and coaches. The newsletter is intended to provide quarterly updates on programs, highlight specific VIOLETS practices and strategies, and share valuable information with teachers. Two volumes of the Dear VIOLET newsletter have been developed and disseminated.
- A video highlighting the VIOLETS program in a Carroll County Head Start program has been filmed through a partnership with the Towson University Division of Innovation & Applied Research at Towson University and DECD/MSDE. The video showcases VIOLETS in action, pre- and post-assessment sessions, and interviews with the classroom teacher, coach, and the Ready At Five Executive Director. The video will be used to introduce VIOLETS to new classrooms and to demonstrate the quality of implementation.
- The goal of the supplemental books, VIOLETS Extension Activities and webinars, the Dear VIOLET newsletter and the video is to create a sustainable “community practice” of VIOLETS teachers who will continue to enrich the VIOLETS program and enhance the language development and acquisition of subsequent classrooms of young children.

### Improved School Readiness –

- VIOLETS students made gains on the TELD (Test of Early Language Development) - a standardized assessment of receptive language.
- VIOLETS students also made gains in two types of vocabulary words, topic words which are content related vocabulary words (e.g. occupations) and key words which are high quality general academic vocabulary words.
- Although all students made gains on topic and key words, ELL students tended to make greater gains on these words and closed much of the gap with their English proficient peers. This is of particular importance because ELL students typically begin school about two grades behind English proficient students.

### **Early Learning Standards**

#### Key Achievements –

- The Maryland Early Learning Standards were completed and published.

#### Summary of Activities –

- The standards have been disseminated through the distribution of the Supporting Every Young Learner: Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy, posting on the DECD web page, and presented at numerous conferences and meetings. The Fine Arts standards revision is nearing completion. Once completed, they will replace the existing standards.

#### Improved School Readiness –

- Teachers, schools and school systems, MSDE, and community early childhood stakeholders are using the Standards in the data analysis of the Kindergarten Readiness.

## **Professional Development Maryland Model for School Readiness - Project 5**

This project is closed, and professional development will continue under Project 6 – Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and the Early Learning Assessment.

## **Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) – Project 6**

### ***Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)***

#### **Key Achievements –**

- The census administration of Kindergarten Readiness Assessment 1.0 (KRA 1.0) was complete in the school year 2014 – 2015. During census administration, 3,500 teachers administered the new KRA to over 67,000 children in Maryland, determining the readiness level of each kindergartener. A state report on readiness was issued and supplemented by a technical report that provided detailed information on the development of the KRA, including reliability and validation of the assessment. Based on the 2014-2015 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) results, nearly half (47%) of all children in Maryland displayed the foundational skills assessed in 2014 – 2015 indicating they were fully ready for kindergarten. More than a third of the students (36%) were approaching readiness. Only 17% of children were assessed as emerging.
- After completion of the fall 2014 census administration of the KRA (i.e., version 1.0), feedback from the field indicated that the time and effort to administer the assessment was very challenging. In an effort to assuage these challenges and concerns from the field, the states decided to reduce the length of the KRA. The state leadership teams, in conjunction with the assessment, technology, and professional development partners, held a meeting to review the item data and to discuss the feedback received from teacher surveys and state teacher focus groups. The goal of this meeting was to agree upon a reduced set of items that would alleviate the burden of administration, yet still retain enough content to allow for the reporting of valid and reliable kindergarten readiness results. The length of the assessment was reduced by approximately 20%, from 63 to 50 items. The decision to remove these items was based on feedback that indicated that they were more difficult or time intensive to administer or they were not as critical to the evaluation of students' readiness for kindergarten. In addition, a few items were moved to other domains based on item level analysis. This resulted in a final assessment broken out into four domains, rather than the six originally developed. The resulting version of the KRA, called version 1.5, is the version teachers are currently administering.

#### **Summary of Activities –**

- The window for the second year of administration of the Kindergarten Readiness (KRA) opened on August 17, 2015. Teachers across the state of Maryland will assess every entering kindergarten student through November 1, 2015. Professional development modules providing teachers with a refresh training on administration of the KRA was available in the summer 2015.

#### **Improved School Readiness –**

- The R4K, which includes the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), provides a framework to assess what students should know and be able to do when they enter kindergarten to ensure they are ready to learn. The KRA provides data that teachers can

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use to identify learning gaps and ensure quality early learning opportunities for children by building on the strengths of every child.

- The KRA results represent an incoming kindergarten student’s set of skills and behaviors as expressed in the Composite Score. The subset of skills and behaviors are research based and have been defined as critical for being ready for school and comprise such skills across four domains of learning – Language/Literacy, Mathematics, Social Foundations, and Physical Development. This means that a kindergartener must demonstrate these skills and behaviors for all the four domains in order to reach a composite score that represents “demonstrating readiness.” A student who has not yet demonstrated those skills in one of the domains has either a composite score of “approaching” or “emerging” readiness.
- A first KRA state report on school readiness for children entering kindergarten in 2014 – 2015 has been released and supplemented by a technical report. The technical report provides detailed information on the development of the KRA, including reliability and validation of the assessment. Based on the 2014-2015 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) results, nearly half (47%) of all children in Maryland displayed the foundational skills assessed in 2014 – 2015 indicating they were fully ready for kindergarten. More than a third (36%) were approaching readiness. Only 17% of children were assessed as emerging. The school readiness report for school year 2015-2016 will be available online at [www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org) and at [www.readyatfive.org](http://www.readyatfive.org) late winter 2016.

### **Early Learning Assessment (ELA)**

Key Achievements –

- The learning progressions and tasks for the ELA from 36 to 72 months for the 12 progressions aligned to the 3 broad OSEP outcomes for special education are complete and ready to be printed. The final learning progressions and tasks will be complete and printed in time for the training of trainers for general education teachers in the fall of 2015. The ELA materials will be available to teachers in the form of a kit available through the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Development.
- The technology to support administration of the ELA has been developed as part of the assessment system infrastructure. A test of the technology was conducted with teachers in the spring of 2015 and changes were made during the summer 2015 based on the feedback received.
- Development of the professional development to support administration of the ELA was finalized in June 2015. The training of trainers (TOT) for the special education specialists at the district level took place in the summer and fall of 2015 for mandatory use of the assessment in the 2015-2016 school year. The professional development for the TOT’s consists of 3 days of face-to-face training and the equivalency of one day of on-line training modules. The professional development at the district level will consist of 2 days of training (face-to-face or blended) with three days of instructional support

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provided by the trainers. Training of trainers for general education teachers, including public school general educators and child care providers, will occur several times in the fall and winter of 2015/2016. Following the TOT, there will be a phased rollout of district level training based on expressed interest in use of the ELA.

### Child Development Innovations – Project 7

#### ***Best Beginnings***

##### Key Achievements –

- The first objective of this project is to field-test Best Beginnings for screening the development of infants and toddlers in childcare centers with childcare teachers implementing the tools. The Best Beginnings system is comprised of a professionally administered Best Beginnings Developmental Screen (BBDS) and the parent-completed Best Beginnings Family Questionnaire (BBFQ).
- Fifty-four early childcare providers from 30 childcare centers across the state agreed to participate. Providers attended one day Best Beginnings training and successfully completed a certification test. Centers were split into two groups: validity or feasibility. The Battelle-II was used as the gold standard assessment and was administered by two graduate students.

##### Summary of Activities –

- The sensitivity of the BBDS (76.9%) and the BBFQ (76.9%), and the specificity of the BBDS (91.5%) and BBFQ (78.9%) exceeded the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation of >70%. The rate of referral in this study was 15.4% (N=20) for the BBDS and 26.8% (N=34) for the BBFQ, and the rate of potential eligibility was 7.7% for the BBDS (N=10) and 7.9% for the BBFQ (N=10). None of the children in the validity group were already enrolled in MITP. Overall, providers and families reported the BBDS (95.3% for parents, 86.4% for providers) and BBFQ (95.3% for parents, 85% for providers) were easy to use. Almost all parents (96%) reported they would be interested in a referral to MITP if their child were found to have a concern on the BBDS or BBFQ. Most parents reported they would complete both the BBDS (95.7%) and BBFQ (96.5%) if asked to do so one to two times per year. Finally, 64.6% of BBDS parents and 50.4% of BBFQ parents reported that the screening experience helped them learn something new about their child.

##### Improved School Readiness –

- Developmental screenings will enable parents and childcare teachers to identify delays earlier and provide students with needed services earlier.

#### ***Developmental Screening***

##### Summary of Activities –

- The regulation requiring all child care providers to use developmental screens will take effect on July of 2016. The free tools are available through December of this year and the online training is free through December of 2016.

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- Child care providers have begun taking face-to-face or free, online training on Developmental Screening Overview. The free online training launched in June and through the month of August: 678 enrolled, 336 certificates issued in the Director or Family Child Care Provider course section and 965 enrolled, 587 certificates issued in the Teacher course section.
- Child care providers are also selecting their developmental screening tool, to date the following tools have been selected: 1,222 ASQ-3 Print version, 69 ASQ-3 Online version, 41 Best Beginnings Developmental Screen, 129 Brigance Early Childhood Screen, 7 ESI-R, 19 Speed DIAL-4.

### Improved School Readiness –

- Developmental screenings will assist in identifying children with special needs earlier and provide them with necessary services to prepare them for Kindergarten.

### *Training of Pediatricians*

#### Key Achievements –

- Completed a training module titled “Starting Early: Supporting Social and Emotional Development and School Readiness.”
- Identified community referral resources; conducted resource mapping to include 449 early childhood referral resources from 23 counties across Maryland. One hundred and three (103) are for early childhood mental health providers/consultants; eighty four (84) are for family support; and two hundred and sixty two (262) are for early childhood education and development.
- Conducted outreach to pediatric primary care providers (PCP’s), The BHIPP team collaborated with the Infant and Early Childhood Council in Frederick and is holding an event this fall for pediatricians who want to learn more about resources for young children and their families.

#### Summary of Activities –

- BHIPP has enrolled 483 providers for training in children’s mental health issues.
- Provided mental health phone consultation for pediatric PCP’s Statewide, a total of 98 consults were for children 0-5.
- Developed curriculum and training plans for pediatric PCP’s, the team developed CHECKup curriculum.
- Learning communities have met in five in regions of the state, materials located on the BHIPP website, <http://www.mdbhipp.org/>.

#### Improved School Readiness –

- In 2014, 50% of Kindergarteners demonstrated proficient skills and behaviors in the Social Foundations domain of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. By providing the medical community with supports needed to improve the social and emotional health of young children, school readiness for many children is enhanced.

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### ***Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (SEFEL)***

#### Key Achievements –

- Created a Maryland SEFEL website, <https://mdbehavioralhealth.com/SBH/course/intro/11152> .
- Posted 2 Trauma informed SEFEL modules.

#### Summary of Activities –

- The SEFEL Outcomes Monitoring Site is on target to be piloted in the fall. In the most recent quarter there were 3,173 unique hits to the web site. 748 people have successfully taken and passed a SEFEL training module. The Innovations Institute at the University of Maryland maintains the website, updates resources and offers technical assistance to those who need it.

#### Improved School Readiness –

- An On-line Management System (OMS) is in the development stage and will be producing data by December 2015.

## **Family Engagement and Support – Project 8**

### ***Maryland Early Childhood Family Engagement Coalition***

#### Key Achievements –

- MSDE was awarded a \$494,370 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to build upon the work accomplished under the RTT ELC Project 8: Family Engagement. The grant was awarded for September 1, 2015--August 31, 2016.
- The Maryland Early Childhood Family Engagement Coalition is the advisory group and a steering committee has been formed to oversee grant implementation.

#### Summary of Activities –

- Presentations on Maryland's Early Childhood Family Engagement Initiatives were made at the U.S. Department of Education on July 26 and at the Maryland Head Start Association Retreat on July 29.
- A meeting of the Maryland Early Childhood Family Engagement Coalition was held on August 17<sup>th</sup> to begin planning for the implementation of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Grant.

#### Improved School Readiness –

- As providers move up the levels in Maryland EXCELS, the amount of family engagement (written and oral communication, parent-teacher conferences, family events, written shared policies, etc.) expected of licensed providers increases. As of July 2015, 50% of Maryland's licensed child care providers are participating in Maryland EXCELS.

### ***Coalition - Effective Practices Toolkit***

#### Key Achievements –

- The Early Childhood Family Engagement Coalition developed a plan for the Effective Practices Toolkit to support the *Maryland Early Childhood Family Engagement*

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*Framework* which helps providers increase and improve family engagement practices with their families.

### Summary of Activities –

- Worked with the Early Childhood Family Engagement Coalition to plan a toolkit that provides early childhood educators and providers with the most effective practices for family engagement in their programs, in turn, increasing family engagement in the home.
- Ensure that the toolkit will be aligned with documents such as the Workforce Competencies Framework and the Guide to Pedagogy. The toolkit design will incorporate *Framework* goals and offer examples that illustrate different agencies and programs that are meeting these goals. Additionally, there are examples from parents on activities they feel are successful.

### Improved School Readiness –

- By developing the Effective Practices Toolkit, providers will use the Family Engagement Framework as a tool and resource to strengthen and improve relationships with the families of the children in care. By working together, families will receive valuable information on being their child's first teacher and advocate and providers will be better informed on the development of children through parental interaction, leading to increased school readiness scores.

## **Parent Cafes**

### Key Achievements –

- The goals for this project have been completed. In 2015, there have been 28 Parent Cafés provided (exceeding their goal of 24) throughout Maryland with over 400 people attending.
- By training an additional 56 Parent Café Facilitators, MFN was able to further increase the capacity for the provision of Parent Cafés.

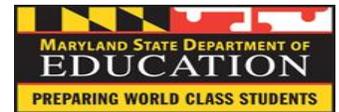
### Summary of Activities –

- In January and in June, MFN held Parent Café Facilitator Training Institute with 56 people completing the training, preparing them to facilitate Parent Café's and train Table Hosts for Parent Cafés.
- From January to March, 8 Parent Cafés were held and an additional 20 Parent Cafés were held from April through June 30.

### Improved School Readiness –

- By increasing awareness of child development, school readiness, and available community resources, parents are better informed to help their children increase the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school. Evaluations completed by participants after each Parent Café show parents find support through their peers, more easily access community resources, and gain an increased understanding of their child's development.

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### *Learning Parties*

#### Key Achievements –

- The goal of the parent-child Learning Parties is to promote school readiness through parent/child interactions and family engagement activities. Learning Parties, interactive, hands-on, parent-child “parties” that promote the development of school readiness skills in young children, promote family and community involvement strategies leading to positive interactions among parents/families, early educators, school administrators and community early childhood stakeholders.
- Learning Parties were expanded into 25% of Maryland’s Title I elementary school attendance areas reaching families with young children enrolled in pre-kindergarten, Head Start, center and family children care homes and children from the community not enrolled in early childhood programs. Learning parties were offered in early childhood programs, elementary schools, Judy Centers, libraries, a homeless shelter, and in community rooms in apartment complexes.

#### Summary of Activities –

- In 2014-15, Learning Party recruitment included email invitations to two regional trainings, followed up by phone calls to invited participants. Four Learning Party Train the Trainers (TOT) trainings took place between February and April of 2015, with a total of sixty-seven (67) participants from Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, Prince George's and Washington Counties, as well as from Baltimore City.
- As of 9/30/15, twenty-five (25) programs had signed MOUs and had conducted either one or two sets of Learning Parties. Twenty-four programs have submitted documentation, including information on which domain, data summary sheets, and parent and child attendance, evaluations, and expenses. Thirty-nine (39) Learning Parties have been conducted thus far, including locations such as Judy Centers, Head Start programs, public prekindergarten programs, charter schools, libraries, and a homeless shelter. Learning Parties were delivered on content including VIOLETS, the Fine Arts, Science, Math, Social Foundations, and Language and Literacy.
- All seven (7) domains of the Learning Party curriculum have been revised to align with the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment College and Career Ready standards. Revised versions of the curriculum will be available electronically to early educators trained in the Learning Party model.

#### Improved School Readiness –

- Families exposed to the Learning Parties have a greater understanding of the importance of early learning as the foundation for school readiness and success in school. Helping parents/families understand and become familiar with activities that they can do to support their children’s early development as their child’s “first teacher” promotes family engagement not only in the early years but throughout a child’s school experiences.
- Surveys at the completion of each Learning Party series indicate that families had a heightened awareness of the importance of early learning and learned new skills to do with their children to support their readiness for school.

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### **Libraries**

#### Key Achievements –

- Libraries have created parent information centers in Title I area libraries; information in various languages is available.
- Libraries have held Library Parent Cafes across the state and have gained valuable information on how to better serve families.

#### Summary of Activities –

- Libraries have partnered with many organizations like Judy Centers, Health Departments, Mental Health Organizations, Poison Control, recreation and Parks and many more to provide resources to families.
- Feedback from parent cafés has included suggestions for specific programs, appreciation for dual language books, and scheduling that is compatible with bus service.
- Library cafes have allowed folks to build relationships with families and librarians.

#### Improved School Readiness –

- Library discussion cafes, programs, and other activities were held throughout the state using the *Every Child Ready to Read* toolkit to engage more families in the excitement of learning and in conversations about school readiness. Libraries have created Family Information Centers to showcase information from outside agencies that is useful to families with young children. A Final Report following the end of the grant on December 31st will share specific information.

### **Raising A Reader**

#### Key Achievements –

- The third year of the Raising A Reader (RAR), a family engagement and early literacy initiative, is now being implemented. Currently more than 2,500 prekindergarten students in 49 Title I schools throughout 9 school districts in Maryland are participating in RAR. Approximately 300 students in newly participating schools will begin RAR this fall.
- Many schools are now having the orientation or kick-off activity for parents in September and October with some of the events being held at the public library.

#### Improved School Readiness –

- An analysis of the first year's results of parent pre and post surveys (latest results available at this time) indicate a number of significant findings with family engagement with literature including an increase in the number of minutes and times that parents are sharing books with their children. Also significant are the number of times that parents are asking children questions about the story and the increase in the amount of time that children are "reading" the book to parents.

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### ***Reach Out And Read***

#### Key Achievements –

- There are 87 pediatric practices and clinics in 19 counties plus Baltimore City participating in Reach Out and Read (ROAR) this year. One hundred thousand children have received free books during their “well” visits to the pediatrician.
- Parents are given advice by doctors and other health practitioners on the importance of reading to their children during each visit. Quality assurance visits are made to sites that have been operating for more than a year. The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is currently exploring alternative options for the continued funding of this program.

#### Improved School Readiness –

- ROAR provides an opportunity for health care practitioners to encourage parents to read with their children and increase their exposure to written materials.

## **Workforce Competency and Leadership Development- Project 9**

### ***Workforce Competency Framework***

#### Key Achievement –

- The new “Knowledge and Competency Framework for Child and Youth Care Professionals” was completed in April.

#### Summary of Activities –

- Evaluation Strategies aligned state and national resources and professional work group members conducted cross checking of alignment and knowledge areas/domains.

#### Improved School Readiness –

- MSDE/OCC approved trainers have been given training on how to use “Maryland’s Knowledge and Competency Framework for Child and Youth Care Professionals” and have begun developing training to meet the specific competencies.
- The Framework is available on-line with hyperlinks to professional resources.
- Collaboration with local community colleges to align current pre-service training to the Framework has begun.
- The development of a self-reflection tool for child care professionals to use alongside the Framework is in progress. This will include application based self-checks.

### ***MAAPP***

#### Key Achievements –

- Eight teachers from Cohort 1 are Maryland certified EC teachers.
- The twelve candidates in Cohort 2 will be completing their second and final year of the program in December 2015.
- Cohort 3 of the Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program (MAAPP) is beginning their first year. The eighteen candidates are currently completing separate ten-day internships at their child care of employment and a public school setting. The

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candidates are being placed in nine school districts throughout the state. They continue to take classes on Saturdays at the Loyola University campus in Columbia.

### Summary of Activities –

- Coaching for Cohorts 2 and 3 occurred throughout 2015, and the teachers demonstrated improved teaching skills.

### Improved School Readiness –

- MAAPP is providing certified early childhood teachers to community settings and thereby increasing the quality of instruction for students.

### ***Strengthening the Workforce***

#### Summary of Activities –

- The State Superintendent formed the Task Force on Teacher Education in Early Childhood Education to make recommendations on how to strengthen the early childhood workforce. The committee met several times during 2014 and issued recommendations to increase the quality of the early learning work force.

#### Improved School Readiness –

The Task Force recommendations will strengthen the quality of the EC workforce:

- All teacher preparation programs shall include in their curricula the Maryland Early Learning standards and core competencies, and practicum experiences in environments that include English language learners and students with special needs. The alternative pathways to obtaining a post-secondary degree in early childhood development education shall be strengthened through full articulation of credits from the community colleges to the four-year colleges regarding the Associate of Arts Degree in Teaching-Early Childhood Education (AAT-ECE).
- Increased access for professionals with bachelor degrees to the EC Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program (MAAPP); and alignment of high school Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs in Early Childhood Education/Childcare with the requirements of the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and its articulation to community colleges.
- MSDE shall collaboratively plan and develop degree programs with colleges that provide dual certification in special and general education to support the achievement of children from birth through primary grades in early childhood education.
- Professional development - In addition to EC programs provided by higher education, the Task Force recommends that MSDE pursue examination of online professional development (including job embedded for early childhood teachers in local school systems), especially those that include mentoring support.
- MSDE shall continue with the current credential incentives and professional development rewards programs for practitioners in early childhood education, and work to expand the Maryland Career and Child Care Development Scholarship Fund to encourage practitioners to pursue and complete a post-secondary degree in early childhood education.

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### ***Early Learning Academies***

#### Key Achievements –

- The third annual series of Early Learning Academies was held July 13, 14, and 16, 2015.

#### Summary of Activities –

- The one day Academies were held in Annapolis, Frederick, and Cambridge, MD. The theme was Executive Function in Action through STEM. Over 400 participants made up of school principals and their team of early childhood teachers and child care teachers from their school communities attended sessions on computer coding, science instruction, math instruction, and teaching the engineering process through puppetry.

#### Improved School Readiness by –

- Based on the evaluation summary, 94% of the respondents found the academy relevant and engaging. Overall, respondents found that the keynote speaker, breakout sessions, and the collaboration time with their school teams would provide them with strategies helpful to their school/program.

## **Early Learning Data System – Project 10**

#### Key Achievements –

- The MSDE Division of Early Childhood Development (DECD) has been developing its Early Childhood Data Warehouse (ECDW) as part of MSDE's Longitudinal Data System, with project completion expected in 2015.
- Enhancements to the existing Child Care Administrative Tracking System (CCATS) expanded the scope of the ECDW by collecting, linking, and integrating data about children in publicly funded early childhood programs, program quality data on all types of early learning and development programs, and early childhood programs participating in the Maryland EXCELS (TQRIS) program.
- Under CCDF funding, MSDE/DECD is currently in the process of completing a basic public portal to enable certain online transactions, and this basic portal is scheduled for implementation in 2016. Project 10 built out the public portal functionality to allow families to apply for services, providers to accept vouchers and submit attendance for payment.

#### Summary of Activities –

- DECD is in the process of testing the professional development grants and incentives module in the internal CCATS application. The professional development grant module will be fully operational and integrated with licensing, subsidy, and credentialing services by June 2016.
- The child care subsidy portal, including child attendance, voucher receipt and payment, is being tested for release in 2015.
- DECD developed the Early Childhood Data Warehouse (ECDW) as the main repository for collection, integration, and reporting of DECD data through the creation of a comprehensive database and the development and implementation of data dashboards, pre-determined data reports, and established policy queries.

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Improved School Readiness by –

- The IT systems will enable MSDE to track student performance on the KRA, analyze their prior attendance in child care and preschool, and examine the quality of the programs students attended.

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For more information:

[http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child\\_care/challenge.htm](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/challenge.htm)