

Task Force on Teacher Education in Early Childhood Report

State Superintendent of Schools and P-20 Leadership Council Update



**Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Early Childhood Development**

The purposes of the Task Force is to develop a framework to increase access to teacher training in early childhood education and improve the quality of teacher education in early childhood learning programs.

Task Force on Teacher Education in Early Childhood Education
Report Prepared for
The State Superintendent of Schools
and
The P-20 Leadership Council

Charge:

The purposes of the Task Force are to develop a framework to increase access to teacher training in early childhood education and improve the quality of teacher education in early childhood learning programs. The Task Force is charged with developing plans to:

1. Develop strategies to expand the number of colleges and universities offering teacher education programs in early childhood education.
2. Strengthen alternative pathways to obtaining a post-secondary degree in early childhood development education.
3. Consider the development of a new degree program, Birth to age 8, that would be a blended curriculum of early childhood special education and general early childhood education.
4. Propose incentives and rewards programs for practitioners in early childhood education to pursue and complete a post-secondary degree in early childhood education.

Task Force Members

Members of the on Teacher Education in Early Childhood Education:

- Dr. Rolf Grafwallner, Division of Early Childhood Development, Chair
Mr. Richard Benfer, Maryland State Education Association
Ms. Tina M. Bjarekull, Maryland Independent College and University Association
Ms. Stacie Burch, Maryland Consortium of Early Childhood Faculty and Administrators
Ms. Amy N. Collier, Maryland Head Start Association
Ms. Tia Coutroupis, Baltimore Teachers Union
Ms. Adriane Dean, University of Maryland Baltimore County
Dr. John Gaddis, Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland
Ms. Marcella Franczkowski (Alternate-Ms. Sandra Smothers), Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services
Ms. Jessica Hargest, Maryland's Governor's Office for Children
Ms. Sarah Honberg, Early Childhood Education Undergrad Major, University of Maryland, College Park
Ms. Laura Hook, Title III/ELL, Maryland State Department of Education
Dr. Brenda Hussey-Gardner, Infants and Toddlers, State Interagency Coordinating Council
Dr. Fran Kroll, Maryland Association of Community Colleges
Ms. Sylvia Morrison, Division of Early Childhood Programs, Montgomery County Public Schools
Ms. Jennifer Nizer, Maryland State Child Care Association
Dr. Edward L. Root, Maryland Association of Boards of Education
Ms. Jean Satterfield (Alternate-Ms. Michelle Dunkle), Division of Certification and Accreditation
Ms. Catherine Shultz, Esq., Interim Secretary, Maryland Higher Education Commission
Dr. Christy Tirrell-Corbin, Early Childhood Education & College of Education Honors Program, University of Maryland, College Park
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Abstract

In December 2011, Maryland was awarded a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, which requires states to implement strategies to improve the quality of early childhood programs and to enhance the qualifications of the workforce in early care and education. An integral part of the four-year Early Learning Challenge grant plan was to examine Maryland’s system of teacher education with respect to those prepared for early childhood education.

As part of the grant strategies, a State Superintendent’s Task Force on Teacher Education in Early Childhood Education was formed, and began its work in September 2013. This final report details the results of the Task Force meetings, and is being submitted to the State Board of Education, the Governor, the General Assembly, and the P-20 Council. The Task Force met four times over the course of the last year, and developed recommendations to strengthen the early learning teacher education workforce.

The Task Force offers recommendations in three key areas:

1. Pre-service early childhood teacher preparation
2. Professional development
3. Continuous improvement

Key Task Force Recommendations:

Pre-service early childhood teacher preparation –

- 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 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

- The Task Force learned that there are 28 early childhood teacher education programs in Maryland’s community colleges. Through Maryland’s four year colleges, there are 13 bachelors of Arts in teacher education programs. In

addition to these programs, 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.

Continuous improvement -

- 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.

Regulatory Revision:

The recommendations do not require any new regulations or changes to current regulations. However, the Chair of the Task Force presented to the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) on the recommendation regarding the development of 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. PSTEB requested that a workgroup be established with critical stakeholders to examine the development of such degree programs and the ramifications on teacher preparation. The Workgroup will be co-chaired by Ms. Franczkowski, Assistant State Superintendent for Special Education and Early Intervention, Dr. Grafwallner, Assistant State Superintendent for Early Childhood Development, Ms. Satterfield, Assistant State Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness, and Ms. Marcella Franczkowski, Assistant State Superintendent for Special Education/Early Intervention Services.

Fiscal Impact:

The recommendations do not require new funding.

Overview of the Process

In December 2011, Maryland received notification that it had been awarded a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, designed to improve the quality of early childhood programs and to enhance the qualifications of the workforce in early care and education. An integral part of the four-year Early Learning Challenge grant is to examine Maryland’s system of teacher education with respect to those prepared for early education. In July 2013, the State Superintendent of Schools, invited the members to join the Task Force and begin this examination of Maryland early learning teacher education – career pathways and access to professional development. At the same time, the P-20 Council was reviewing similar issues for K-12 education.

The Task Force began its work in September 2013 and concluded in fall 2014. The Task Force met four times over the year and conducted surveys and discussions in between meetings via email. The completed report was submitted to the State Superintendent on December 1, 2014.

Task Force’s Work:

Over the past decade, MSDE has invested in early learning based on the research that indicates that investments in early learning for children, ages birth to five, provides great dividends in student achievement throughout their school careers. Given this assertion, Maryland continues to work to ensure that all children in child care and preschool are in high quality learning environments. One key dimension of quality care is highly skilled child care providers/teachers. The Task Force reviewed the career pathways that are available to early learning educators:

- Pathway 1 - Child care professionals may gain credentials through professional development coursework and on- the- job experience. The coursework may be taken at community colleges or through state approved trainers. Through this path, providers may participate in Maryland’s Child Care Credentialing Program.
- Pathway 2 - Other professionals attend community colleges or four year colleges and earn Associate’s or Bachelor’s degrees in early childhood education. Through the Associate degree, a graduate places at level 4+ on the career ladder of the Child Care Credentialing Program, and the Bachelor degree graduate can obtain a Maryland teaching certificate.

In Maryland, both paths provide curricula that are based on Maryland’s Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. (See Appendix H and Maryland’s teacher certification regulations for additional explanation.)

Over four meetings, the Task Force reviewed the following components of early learning teacher education:

- Credentialing for licensed child care professionals and its impact on the supply and demand for qualified staff.
- Credentialing and certification requirements in other states for prekindergarten and special education teachers.

- Career and College Readiness Program for high school students which provides child development course work and practical experiences to Maryland students.
- The Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program (MAAPP) which provides an alternative program through which already-employed Bachelor degreed teachers in selected licensed child care centers utilize a State approved curriculum to obtain a teaching certificate. (See Appendix I for details.)
- Scholarships for child care professionals by the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF) to assist child care providers in pursuing an Associates and/or a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education.
- The articulation of life experiences to college credits. (See Appendix L.)
- The potential for a new teacher education dual certification program for birth to grade 3, which includes an updated and blended curriculum of early childhood special education and general early childhood education.
- Current funding mechanisms, incentives and rewards programs for practitioners in early childhood education to pursue and complete a post-secondary degree in early childhood education.

Purpose of the Task Force

The goal of the Task Force on Teacher Education in Early Childhood Education is to strengthen supports for early childhood educators to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities in educating children birth to five. Over the past two decades, aside from State certification requirements, Maryland has established structures to support early childhood educators:

- Established a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.
- Implemented the Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program which establishes required pre-service training, and levels of knowledge gained through professional development and on the job experience with monetary incentives. Also, participants in the Credential Program have access to training funds up to \$400 annually.
- Maryland Community Colleges offer the Associates of Arts Degree in Teaching in Early Childhood Education (AAT-ECE). These programs, along with Maryland's four year colleges, developed outcomes-based standards that are aligned with those of national early childhood organizations, to ensure transition of course credits from the AAT to the Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education.
- Established the Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs (MAAPP) which offers an alternative pathway for teacher certification in early childhood education for those who have earned a Bachelor's degree and are interested in teaching early childhood education.
- Created the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF) which is available to participants in the Credentialing Program to pursue either an Associate's or Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in early childhood education, child development, family studies, or related disciplines.

These structures have provided pathways for child care providers to increase their skills in offering high quality care. With the passage of the Maryland Prekindergarten Expansion Act and the increased demand for State certified teachers in early childhood education, Maryland will need to set up an infrastructure to produce more qualified/certified Prekindergarten teachers. These classrooms will be in both public schools and licensed child care environments.

With these needs in mind, the State Superintendent created the Task Force to review the current structures and make recommendations for strengthening them, including recommendations for new college and career pathways to assist early childhood educators in improving the quality of early childhood education.

Recommendations

Pre-Service Early Childhood Teacher Education:

- All early childhood teacher preparation programs in Maryland will include instruction to students on the Maryland Early Learning Standards, Maryland core competencies, the Maryland's Family Engagement Framework, and the Ready for Kindergarten (R4K) framework. This will ensure their ability to implement those standards and competencies in classroom practice.
- Current practicum and student teaching experiences should provide opportunities to work in classrooms with children with special needs and English language learners where possible.
- Classroom experiences should be embedded at specific points throughout the program rather than just in the final semester/year. Taking this integrated approach would allow students to apply concepts in real time situations and engage in guided self reflections and coaching activities.
- MSDE/DECD will develop a guide similar to the Kansas guide entitled "Careers in Early Childhood Education" (<http://www.ks.childcareaware.org/PDFs/CareerGuide.pdf>) to provide those interested in early childhood education careers a clear understanding of the career paths and the necessary skills and education for the various positions. In particular, this guide should be presented to students entering two and four year colleges early childhood programs. Additionally, high school career counselors should provide the Guide to interested high school students (see charts in Appendices J and K).
- Expand opportunities for high school students to interface with mentors in the field of Early Childhood Education through paid and non-paid internships in various settings to gain more experience in working with young children.
- Encourage all high school programs in Early Childhood Education/Child Care to upgrade their programs to meet the requirements of the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, review articulation agreements with community colleges on an annual basis, and develop articulation agreements with baccalaureate-degree granting institutions.
- Develop a process for accurate data collection of high school Early Childhood Education students receiving postsecondary credits, including the number of students and the number of credits earned by each student. Request that postsecondary institutions provide transcribed credits (on a college transcript) rather than articulated credits, and provide transcribed credits for the CDA. Ensure that the high school Early Childhood Education program provides college level work.
- Where possible, teacher education programs at institutions of higher education should provide opportunities for practicum and student teaching experiences at the student's

site of employment to assist those that must work while continuing their college coursework.

- MSDE/DECD will continue to offer the MAAPP in early childhood education for early educators with four-year degrees to earn the professional equivalency certification. In the future, the MAAPP should include teaching experiences in classrooms that include English Language Learners and special education students. The MAAPP for early childhood education shall include a service requirement for the certified participant to work at a licensed child care facility for two years after meeting all MAAPP requirements. DECD shall examine ways to make the participation in the MAAPP more cost-effective.
- MSDE will collaboratively plan and develop teacher preparation programs with teacher preparation program providers to provide dual certification in special and general education to support the achievement of children from birth through primary grades in early childhood education. These teacher preparation programs for birth to age eight will meet the MSDE Program Approval requirements through a blended curriculum leading to a dual certification in early childhood general and special education.

Professional Development:

- Facilitate opportunities for test preparation for students prior to taking PRAXIS I and II.
- The Task Force learned that there are 28 early childhood teacher education programs in Maryland's community colleges. Through Maryland's four year colleges, there are 13 bachelors of Arts in teacher education programs. In addition to these programs, the Task Force recommends that MSDE pursue examination of online professional development, especially those that include mentoring support. Examples of such programs are:
 - Head Start University, which was developed through the partnership of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and several U.S. University systems, and
 - Thinkport, which was developed by MSDE/DECD and Maryland Public Television.

Continuous Improvement:

- MSDE/DECD will promote and financially support the dissemination of State-recommended curricula for children, birth to age five, to ensure that early childhood programs learn the necessary skills/techniques to teach all children, including those with special needs and English language learners.
- MSDE/DECD shall develop a new credential for child care providers which will require an exam to determine core knowledge and competencies in early childhood education. Upon passing the exam, the provider would earn a Maryland Child Care

Teacher Credential. The exam for the new Maryland Child Care Credential would measure the candidate's knowledge of child growth and development theories, methods and practical application to early childhood instruction and classroom management. The Maryland Child Care Teacher Credential would place the provider at level 4 on MSDE's child care career ladder (See Appendix H). Passage of the exam would articulate to community college credits, and then to four year colleges. This exam will replace the currently offered challenge tests for life experience credit.

Next Steps

1. The Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) charged MSDE's divisions of Educator Effectiveness, Early Childhood Development and Special Education/Early Intervention to form a workgroup to:
 - Examine certification requirements and how they meet current classroom needs.
 - Investigate if other states have dual certification certificates. If yes, what are the requirements? What is the market for these programs in dual certification programs?
 - How will internships be practically accomplished in the course of study? Is there a cost effective approach for internships?
2. MSDE will work with the Maryland Consortium of Early Childhood Faculty and Administrators to:
 - Promote the inclusion of the Core of Knowledge Competencies, the Family Engagement Framework, and the Ready for Kindergarten framework education course curricula.
 - Encourage that practicum and student teaching experiences be embedded at different points during the program and in settings with special needs and English language learners.
 - Facilitate PRAXIS I and II test preparation for students.
 - Develop an exam to replace challenge tests statewide, and provide credits.
- DECD will:
 - Develop a guide to provide those interested in early childhood education careers a clear understanding of the career paths and the necessary skills and education for various positions.
 - Implement a new Maryland Child Care Credential for those that pass the new exam.
 - Continue to support the MAAPP and provide a career path for certified early childhood teachers.
 - Continue to investigate online professional development.
 - Promote and financially support the dissemination of state recommended curricula to early learning programs.
- MSDE's Division of Career and College Readiness will:
 - Recommend that EC high school programs expand opportunities for students to interface with mentors through paid and non-paid internships in diverse settings.
 - Provide technical assistance to all high school programs in Early Childhood Education/Child care to upgrade their programs to meet the CDA credential requirements.
 - Encourage all high school programs to work with community college early learning faculty to develop a process for accurate data collection of high school Early Childhood Education students receiving postsecondary credits, and for curriculum upgrades to the college level.

Resources

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Report is available online:

http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/challenge.htm

Appendices

- Appendix A: Task Force Statement of Work
- Appendix B: September 17, 2013 Meeting Materials
- Appendix C: December 17, 2013 Meeting Materials
- Appendix D: April 17, 2014 Meeting Materials
- Appendix E: July 17, 2014 Meeting Materials
- Appendix F: April 2014 Task Force Survey Results
- Appendix G: July 2014 Task Force Survey Results on the Recommendations
- Appendix H: Child Care Credentialing Ladder
- Appendix I: Maryland Approved Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs (MAAPP)
- Appendix J: EC Career Pathways
- Appendix K: EC Job Requirements by Position
- Appendix L: Title 13B Maryland Higher Education Commission, Subtitle 02

Appendices available online:

http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/challenge/docs/TaskForce-on-TeacherEd_Appendix.pdf