

# Office of Child Care (OCC) Advisory Council Meeting Minutes August, 19, 2021

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION OUTCOME	
<b>Attendees</b>  Please note that attendance was taken from sign in on the chat.	Council members:	Elizabeth Huffman, Dr. Sonia Pruneda-Hernandez, Jennifer Nizer Patsy Warnick, Elizabeth Huffman, Delania Ware on behalf of Gloria Brown-Burnett, Ruby Daniels, Sharon Holloway, Dona Mullen, Jennifer Arnaiz, Nicole Johnson, Barb Darsow, Chris Peusch, Lacey Egerton
	Guests:	David O'Brien, Bill Hudson, Monica Braden, Joan Johnson, Sandy Buckwalter Dana Miller, Arlene Ennis, Flora Gee, Monica Braden, Erin Olsen, Lisa Herbst,, Christina Lopez, Meg McFadden  <b>Special Guest:</b> Jeanna Capito
	MSDE Staff:	Tara Bartosz, Louis Valenti, Angeline Bishop-Oshoko, Rene' Williams, Laurie Moran, Levette Trusty-Woodrum, John Lamb, Dianna C Aguirre, Darlene M Schmidt, Neffitina Thompson, Mary B. Johnson, Yvonne F. Bell, Meghan Leach Sarah Urban, Jena Smith, Andrea Zabel, Vickie DiSanto, Sherry Tsigounis, Stephen Lenzner, Janet Speak, Lisa Smith, Rosemary Lober, Urceal Cook, Vanessa Jones
<b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b>	Christina P welcomed guests and Council Board Members called meeting to order at 10:02 AM  Guests were asked to sign in the chat box for attendance purposes.  Tara B indicated that meetings will no longer be recorded and minutes will be taken as they were in the past and posted. Also indicated that meeting will be ONLY recorded for minute taking purposes  Phones and speakers are asked to be muted  <b>Chris P</b> Asked for minutes to be accepted into the meeting and that recording was reviewed. Recorded meetings minutes were asked to be accepted by the council.  Amendment to minutes: Ruby asked her name to be added to the agenda for August 19, 2021  Indicated that we are looking for have more presentation at the last meeting such as Steven Hicks with the Blueprint. Sonia P with Alternative Certification and The Early Learning Branch for Universal Pre-K  <b>Jennifer N</b> Provided updates as of August 19,2021 regarding Leadership at MSDE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Superintendent: Mohammed Choudhury</li> <li>• Chief of Staff: Ary Amerikaner</li> <li>• Dr. Carol Williamson will be retiring from MSDE</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Guidelines/Goals of Council</b>	As a reminder: The purpose of the OCC Advisory Council is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise and counsel the OCC</li> <li>• Review regulations proposed by state agencies regulating child care.</li> <li>• Review issues and problems relating to care of children and suggested priorities for consideration by the OCC; and</li> <li>• Identify interdepartmental issues of importance to child care providers and users that should be</li> </ul>	

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	<p>addressed by the OCC and other State agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council meetings are “open” meetings but not “public” hearings. What this means is that the meeting is open to anyone who would like to attend. However, it is not a “public” meeting, in that the topics of discussion are limited to only those items on the Agenda. OCC Advisory Council meetings are not the appropriate forum to share concerns or complaints.</li> <li>The Agenda for each meeting is set prior to the meeting in consultation between the Department and the Chairperson for the Council. A Council member who would like to have an item considered for the agenda should make the request no later than two weeks prior to the meeting by contacting Tara Bartosz at tara.bartosz@maryland.gov or Chris Peusch, <a href="mailto:mscca1@comcast.net">mscca1@comcast.net</a>. The Department will share information as specified on the Agenda set for the meeting.</li> <li>After all items on the Agenda are concluded, the Council meeting will be opened to “Other Business.” This will allow for discussion of items not necessarily related to those on the Agenda. To ensure an equal amount of time for participation, each speaker will be asked to limit their thoughts and comments to no more than three minutes. Comments made during this time should be succinct, specific and of interest to the Council members.</li> <li>Places at the table are reserved for Council members only. Therefore, non-member visitors attending the meetings should sit at the tables indicated for guests until the OCC Advisory Council chair invites visitors to sit in any remaining seats at the table.</li> <li>Comments and remarks that do not coincide directly with Agenda items may not be shared until the meeting is opened to “Other Business”.</li> </ul>
<b>OCC Advisory Vacancies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member of the Senate</li> <li>Member of the House of Delegates</li> <li>Pediatrician w/Interest &amp; Expertise in Child Care Issues</li> <li>Parent, user of Child Care Services</li> </ul> <p>In August, Council member will be asked to renew their seat – if desired. Tara Bartosz will contact each Council member to inquire and discuss position on the Council</p>
<b>ARPA Town Halls</b>	<p>Looking to schedule 3 Town Hall meetings to discuss the 193M of ARPA funding. MSDE is interested in hearing. We are talking about the grants because the grants are all, this is really looking at the 193 million and what supports we can put in to help stabilize the system and make it better. This is about the additional Federal funding not the direct grants so we're excited to build new and reimagine a new system with some of the money that we have and how to create some new initiatives as well as sustain those initiatives in the future.</p>
<b>Legislative Updates:</b>	<p><b>Chris P:</b> There was a staff qualifications bill that passed. Understands that was talked about as far as the regulatory changes will be forthcoming and maybe some policies to see if that helps within the regulatory process to be able to qualify staff.</p> <p>Looking to have flexibility with variances.</p> <p><b>Jennifer N:</b> We are looking at the 45 hour critical competencies for infants and toddlers. We are putting a policy together so that it can be counted towards the 45 hour for infant toddler that we have in place already. It would be like an equivalency.</p>
<b>Maryland Family Child Care Task Force Presentation</b>	<p>Please see the attached PPT regarding the presentation from Jeanna Capito. Results from survey.</p> <p><b>Jeanna Capito:</b> And as part of that work, one of the desires was to really ensure that the voice of family childcare is being heard, it is really driving and leading on the planning for how the state responds to enhance the programs that are already in place for family childcare and understand that landscape. This is being shared that as part of</p>

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	<p>framing up the work that the task force has been doing in order to give context for this particular survey that we wanted to share some results on.</p>
<p><b>Old Business</b></p> <p><b>Work Force</b></p>	<p><b>Chris P</b> Stated that there are a lot of issues surrounding the decline of family childcare and workforce shortage crisis in our industry. As far as childcare, what impacts accessibility for families to find childcare. A lot of programs are having trouble opening classrooms or having staff with regard to center-based or non-public nursery schools. The decline of family childcare, we need to build that supply up as well so families have the choices and the quality programs that they deserve. We need to keep this in mind as we're looking at the town halls and as we are working in our respective positions, how we can address these barriers.</p> <p>It was asked if any council member want to reflect upon any strategies or ideas with regard to the workforce crisis and the workforce development?</p> <p><b>Betty H:</b> I'd like to talk about investing in our young employees that are coming in. So I'd like to say invest in your young employees you'll know within two to three weeks if she is worth investing in. And what we're doing now is paying for their ongoing trainings, getting the 90 hours, make sure they're have their 45, all that I paid for that, because I think that's a struggle for a lot of new employees, especially the younger ones coming in. So that's kind of working with us right now. We have about four or five. The intent is to invest in them, either mentor and get there, go in and say, Hey, this let's start with your AA degree. That's move on to your four-year degree. And that gives some self-esteem. And I think you really have to mentor the younger ones. Now, there are some we have that are no longer with us, which they should have gone anyhow. But I think that's where we need to start hiring and weeding the ones we don't want out, but encouraging and investing in the ones that we do.</p> <p><b>Flora G:</b> There's a really big problem with staffing everybody knows. You know, we're starting to see more cases of COVID here. We were COVID free for almost a year. And then July 20th, we had our first case. I now have five children who have had COVID and two teachers fully vaccinated. We're a hundred percent vaccinated, but two breakthrough cases here with teachers. So we are continuing to pay our staff. We're doing everything we can. We told our parents, you only have to pay for two weeks of a quarantine, but now we're in our second quarantine with one whole classroom. So nobody's paying at this time, but we are still supporting our staff and paying compensation and wages. And I think that for many centers, they can't even do that. It's just not possible. So I'm hearing programs where staff are either not being paid or they have to use their leave time if they have it. And it's like a double whammy, you have less income, but you're trying to support your staff so you don't lose them. And they feel supported because they are risking their lives every day they come to work. And so as we look at ways to work on retention of the field and the workforce, there needs to be some kind of help and support for when you're not receiving income from your families, but you're still paying for your staff.</p> <p><b>Jennifer Responded</b> The usage of the grant money is to assist with situation such as this.</p> <p><b>Bill Hudson:</b> The workforce problem or challenge is certainly multifaceted. And, you know, there have to be a lot of efforts put towards rectifying that. The Alliance is focused on one particular group. And that's still family childcare providers who have P3 certification who are then allowed to teach in the pre-K expansion program. Per the task force results, there are a lot of family childcare providers out there that have degrees, but to get</p>

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Scholarship Concerns	<p>that P3 certification, they have to go through student teaching. Sonya and her team at Montgomery county are way ahead of the curve. If we can remove a huge burden of this or a huge hurdle to getting more family childcare providers interested and actually able to do pre-K teaching through the pre-K expansion program.</p> <p><b>Jennifer responded;</b> Asked Bill to share his ideas on the Town Halls</p> <p><b>Sonia P</b> We have been actually doing extensive work with many of the childcare centers in our county. And we've actually had other states and organizations from out of state reach out to us asking how we did that, connecting the community college with childcare providers. What we do is we've actually been doing virtual job fairs and onsite interviews through breakout rooms. But I just want to put out there that sometimes the colleges, many times the colleges are forgotten, remember that the community colleges have the workforce development side and the credit side and the colleges, Prince George's, Montgomery, Anne Arundel, all these throughout the state have a lot of outreach because we have community, we have students. And there's a great opportunity for centers, and family childcare to reach out to the community colleges and see how you can collaborate.</p> <p><b>Meg McFadden</b> I just wanted to bring up a concern about the MSDE childcare scholarships. I've been told that when parents put in their application, they do not get any verification that it's been received and it can take up to 10 business days, which is two weeks for them to even be notified that something is missing and it can take up to a month for them to be approved. And so if you have parents that are trying to go back to work and they have a job waiting for them, but they don't have childcare, they haven't been working. So they don't have the money to pay ahead to get a slot in childcare., it's just a huge barrier to people entering the workforce and that includes childcare workers. We're trying to hire afterschool workers, but if they have an infant or toddler that they can't bring to the school age program, they can start when school starts.</p> <p><b>Rene' W. responded</b> With reference to the 30-day process: The 30 day process is really a reference to 30 days for parents to be able to complete the application process from the time that it was received by the vendor. So, the application has to be approved or denied within 30 days. However, if a parent submits all the required documentation with their application, it will not take 30 days for that application to be processed. And we already have a process in place that once a parent submits their application, they can contact the interactive voice recognition system and track the status of their application. And in reference to the missing documentation letter within five days, that letter is sent to the parent telling them the information that is being missed. So I think that our process is as streamlined as it possibly can be at this time. And what we're working on is always looking at ways to improve the process. I appreciate the provider bringing this this concern to our attention and allowing us to address it.</p> <p>Meg suggested how APRA funds can be used to better the system for quicker processing</p> <p><b>Jennifer N Responded</b> Asked Meg to share her ideas on the Town Halls</p> <p>Eventually, the R &amp;R will have a "family navigator" where they will be working with families and helping them fill out applications because of the problem comes when families/parents fill the application and they don't send everything in at one time and it's piecemeal. The missing documents are really what takes the 30 days. We will have family navigators in each R&amp;R that will specifically be working and helping families and doing outreach.</p> <p><b>Flora G</b> Is MSDE paying based on enrollment and not attendance? We surely do need to be able to be compensated</p>

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<p><b>MFN RFP</b></p>	<p>for CCS for the closures that we are facing due to COVID.</p> <p><b>Rene responded</b> We are not paying on enrollment but we do pay for 60 days of absences.</p> <p><b>Lacey E</b> Shared comments on the changes to the RFP for the R &amp; Rs. For those that were not aware, on Monday, August 9th, MFN released the RFP for operating a child care resource center. The RFP is initially asking for sponsoring agencies for January to June, 2022. And then as the state coordinating entity of the childcare resource network, as funding is renewed each year, we then renew our sponsoring agencies up to an additional four years. This RFP looks very different than prior years, and is the result of five years of strategic planning and focus groups with many of our partners, including those sitting around this virtual table. Obviously we worked very, very diligently with MSDE over the last several months. And yes, what the RFP shows is that there will be eight childcare resource center regions starting January 1st using terms.</p> <p>Thank you to MSDE making some additional funding available.</p> <p>We are asking interested agencies to submit their interest by August 27th. All that information is available on the RFP. Just to give you a sense of timeline, the RFP is due September 10th. We will be spending the rest of September, beginning of October doing the review process. I'm incredibly fortunate that some of our partners here on this call and others that we've identified are going to join us to be part of the review teams that we can get perspectives and opinions from many individuals who are well-invested in our early childhood community. We are hoping fingers crossed if the timeline works the way we're intending it to, to announce the new sponsoring agencies mid to late October, at which time there will be extensive outreach in those regions where potentially a sponsoring agency has changed so that we can support providers in recognizing what's going to be coming.</p>
<p><b>New Business</b></p>	<p>Due to time restraints, not all of the new business was address and will be placed under old business for November meeting</p> <p><b>Jennifer N</b> I just want to say childcare scholarship is not the only thing that's moving forward with becoming more technology driven. It also our modernization that we will be launching and hopefully the RFP will be out shortly.</p> <p>Everyone needs to start becoming familiar with creating usernames and passwords to that they can get in. That's how you're going to do scholarships. It's probably going to be licensing. It's going to be done all tech, it's very technology driven. We need providers to really start thinking about that. We need to try to get people prepared so our modernization effort will move forward.</p> <p>We would like to give bonuses to individuals with some of our ARPA funds. And the only way that we can pay individuals is if they are in credentialing. They must fill out an application and send it in for the credentialing program. They have to be participating.</p> <p>That is what you need to start talking about to providers; if you are not in credentialing, you will not be able to get a bonus because they can't pay you any other way.</p>
<p><b>OCC Updates</b></p> <p><b>Listening sessions</b></p>	<p>These are still continuing but not recording session and no minutes are taken for them– Looking to do them less frequent such as quarterly in 2022. Perhaps look at specific topics to expand length such a presentations etc.</p>

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<p><b>APR Updates</b></p>	<p>As of August 19, 2021 Tara B reported:</p> <p>Received Applications 5,757 applications 5,200 verified 1089 emails received and responses sent * Several duplicates</p> <p>63.7% Family Providers 2.47% Large Family Child Care 31.54% Child Care Centers 2.12% Letter of Compliance</p> <p>44.88% stated under 50% capacity 55.12% stated over 50% capacity</p> <p><b>Usage of funds</b> 91% Rent/Mortgage, utilities, facilities, maintained and insurance 87% Equipment and supplies 84% Personnel protective equipment, cleaning and other health and safety practices 81% Personnel Costs 92% were open and operating by 03.11.2021</p> <p>7.98% were temporarily closed and agree to open by 09.07.21</p> <p>Office of Child Care MSDE had our second Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Follow up meeting on 8/18/21 at 9AM, to further discuss sections 2, 3, 5 and 8 of the proposed FY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan. Currently, we are working on revisions and submissions from the follow up meeting. Once the plan has received all final approvals from the ACF, it will be posted for all to see.</p> <p>Both Lou Valenti and Jennifer Nizer are currently reviewing all meeting notes and requests from the School Age Workgroup Committee for consideration. Both Licensing and Scholarship regulations will be amended within the next couple of months to include the definition of an Intimate Partner (a person eligible to seek relief from domestic violence...) and "if committed during the preceding 5 years", when it pertains to any past drug offenses.</p>
<p><b>Licensing updates</b></p>	<p>Currently, we have 7,213 programs and providers currently approved for operation. All licensing staff have completely returned to working in the regional offices. We have begun the New Hire training for the 24 new licensing staff. OCC staff have been reviewing and updating our policies and standard operating procedures. Vacancies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anne Arundel-Supervisor</li> <li>• Baltimore County-2 LS</li> <li>• Montgomery-3 LS</li> <li>• Western MD-2 vacancies</li> <li>• Southern MD-2 LS</li> <li>• Harford/Cecil-1 LS</li> </ul>



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<p><b>Maryland EXCELS Updates</b></p>	<p>We've created videos for promoting Maryland EXCELS programs, educating about the importance of high-quality child care and boosting families' confidence when choosing a program. Check out the first video on the Maryland EXCELS Facebook page under videos or at the following link <a href="https://www.facebook.com/MDEXCELS/videos/958242941591655">https://www.facebook.com/MDEXCELS/videos/958242941591655</a>. Be on the lookout for our tips video series soon.</p> <p>As of July 2021, there are 4,305 Maryland EXCELS quality rated programs and a total of 4,830 programs participating. 63% of all licensed child care programs are participating in Maryland EXCELS.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, protections continue to be in place for Maryland EXCELS participating and quality rated programs and for programs accredited by and working toward Maryland Accreditation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Maryland Accreditation</b></p> <p>There are currently 514 child care centers and public prekindergarten programs participating in Maryland Accreditation and 356 accredited programs.</p> <p>Optional, remote technical assistance has replaced Program Improvement Visits. A program may request individualized technical assistance, which is provided by Quality Assurance Specialists.</p> <p>The Accreditation Support Fund provides assistance with the cost of National Accreditation fees or Maryland Accreditation materials. Visit <a href="http://MarylandEXCELS.org/maryland-accreditation">MarylandEXCELS.org/maryland-accreditation</a>.</p>
<p><b>Workforce Development Branch Updates</b></p>	<p>The Branch welcomes Julia Chavez. Julia will continue training cohorts of professionals to support multi-language learners through the WIDA Early years, coordinate the Maryland Early Childhood Leadership program grant, update the Maryland Knowledge and Competency Framework for Child and Youth Care Professional along with other assigned duties.</p> <p><b>Maryland Child Care Credential Program</b> Effective September 1, 2021. The Credentialing Branch will change its name to Workforce Advancement Branch! Updated resources and information coming soon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Credential Child Care Providers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5897 child care center teachers</li> <li>• 610 family child care providers .</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund program</b> We are proud to announce 70 CCCPDF graduates for the class of 2021!</p>

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	<p>108 New Students were approved for FY22</p> <p>282 Continuation Students submitted an application to continue in the fund for FY 22</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Empowering Teacher Grant Online Degree-Coppin State University</b></p> <p>The MSDE Empowering Teachers Grant will provide the opportunity for a full online offering of the ECED/HD program at Coppin State University.</p> <p>The Department of Teaching and Learning has been working towards the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o (1) Create robust online courses that are accessible and consistent for learners throughout the program, (</li> <li>o 2) Partner with CSU Faculty to ensure that courses meet the learners needs, and</li> <li>o (3) Engage in recruitment and marketing that assures local home, family, community child care providers, high school students, and community college students are aware of this great opportunity.</li> <li>o The enrollment of potential participants will begin in Fall 2021 with the online programming starting in Spring 2022.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ECE Workforce Workgroup</b></p> <p>The committee is at its final phase of finalizing the recommendations for a comprehensive early childhood workforce career pathway.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CDA project</b></p> <p>Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential as of August 1, 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 558 vouchers have been issued.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>State Coordinating Entity (SCE) Services for the Maryland Child Care Resource Center Network (MCCRCN):</b></p> <p>Grant has been awarded to Maryland Family Network, Inc. (MFN).</p> <p>MFN FY 2021 grant is extended to December 31, 2021 for planning purposes in the restructuring of the MCCRCN.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Emergency Preparedness Training and Support for Registered and Licensed Child Care Providers</b></p> <p>FY2022 grant (\$75,000) has been awarded to Abilities Network, Inc.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Training Approval Program</b></p> <p>Trainers can now conduct Face-to-face training and Virtual trainings.</p> <p>Zero to Three Critical Competencies: As of July 28, 2021, 132 participants have completed the training. 1 new cohort scheduled for September 16 – December 16, 2021.</p> <p>Maryland Pyramid Model State Leadership Team (SLT)/Equity Subgroup: Finalizing next steps to roll out the companion document for the SEFEL training. Reviewed the Benchmarks of Quality to determine progress and next steps</p>



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Scholarship Updates	<p><b>PAPERLESS</b> - We Listened. CCS Central 2 will begin emailing invoices! As you requested, the Child Care Scholarship Program is going paperless on September 1, 2021. All providers must maintain an active email address and check it for correspondence from the Child Care Scholarship Program. <b>Only Licensing specialists can update a provider's email address</b> in CCATS. Please refer to the inserts included with your monthly invoices for more information.</p> <p><b>ATTENDANCE AUDITS</b> - Reminder: Parents are required to sign-in and sign-out daily. Providers are required to keep sign-in and sign-out records for 5 years. If a provider's invoice is selected for an Attendance Audit and the provider cannot produce parent signatures for each day of the service period, the provider will be charged an overpayment for the amount paid.</p> <p><b>USE UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION</b> - Providers who have printed surplus forms must use the UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION when sending to CCS Central 2. Go to <a href="http://Money4ChildCare.com">Money4ChildCare.com</a> to confirm the current contact information for CCS Central 2 or use the inserts we have provided with your previous invoices.</p> <p><b>CCS CUSTOMER SERVICE</b> - CCS Central 2 receives over 20,000 calls per month. For this reason, it is not always possible for a child care provider to speak directly to a representative. A more recommended option is to email your questions to CCS Central 2, which allows you to ask and review the answer to your questions at a time that fits your schedule. Email questions directly to CCS Central 2, at: <a href="mailto:CCSScholarships@maryland.gov">CCSScholarships@maryland.gov</a></p>
Next Meeting	February 17, 2022 10:00a – 12:00p
Future 2022 Meetings	May 19, 2022 August 18, 2022 November 17, 2022