



Office of Child Care (OCC) Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
 Thursday, February 27, 2014



AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION OUTCOME
Attendees	<p>Council Members: Jennifer Nizer, Edisa Padder, Crystal Barksdale, Terry Bridger, Debbie Moore, Judy Kalski, John Krupinsky, Rachel London, Faith Miller, Shannon Burroughs-Campbell, Steve Rohde, Lee Ann Kingham, Dorothy Adam</p> <p>MSDE Staff: Rolf Grafwallner, Liz Kelley, Lindi Budd, Betsy Blair, Paula Johnson, Gail Tucker, Jamie Ekatomatis, Linda Zang, Audrey Smith</p> <p>Guests: Lynda Davenport, Diane Gordy, Patricia E. Arriaza, Amy Beal, Gayle Headen, Virginia Dee, Donna Ponn, Madie Green, Karen WallaceBattefield, Debbie Moore, Chris Peusch</p>
Welcome And Opening Remarks	<p>The meeting was called to order by Jennifer Nizer. Liz warmly welcomed everyone.</p>
<p>Assistant Superintendent / Director's Report</p> <p>Legislative Session – Budget Hearings</p> <p>Legislation</p>	<p>Liz shared with group that the Legislative Session was in progress and both of the Division's Budget Hearings went well. She further shared that a recommendation was made to cut Two Million Dollars (\$2M) from the budget. There were disagreements with regard to the budget cut. It was the hope of the team that the proposed budget remained unchanged. She also thanked everyone who was present and testified as well as those who provided invaluable information on behalf of the Division.</p> <p>It was also mentioned that there was a lot of positive interest from the committees with regard to the Budget hearing, particularly Child Care Subsidy. She was hopeful that the two additional two levels will be opened that are currently frozen.</p> <p><i>SB716/HB1276 – Child Care Centers – Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Act</i></p> <p>Information concerning SB 716/HB 1276 - Child Care Centers Health Eating and Physical Activity Act was presented. This bill would require modifications to the Regulations concerning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Breastfeeding - facilities enrolling infants would have to have staff who have taken training to support breastfeeding mothers. – Sugary Drinks – the serving of added sugar to beverages would be prohibited. – Fat Content of Milk – milk would need to be fat free or 1% unless otherwise requested by the parent or physician (for children age 12 months and older) – Screen Time – Screen time has been included in the Maryland EXCELS criteria based on recommendation received over a year ago. Liz stated that several other States have put regulations in place with regard to screen time and that the regulation will reflect best practice. She emphasized that the limits on screen time are to address passive viewing by children. <p>Liz said because of the frequency of the changes in recommendations, with regard to research and best practices, the Bill had been modified to be broad instead of specific as to the requirements for fat content and screen time standards. Liz also provided information about a survey to identify current practices in child care settings with regard to appropriate beverages for the children in care facilities.</p>

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	<p><i>Question: Will these changes affect all child care providers?</i></p> <p><i>Response from Liz:</i> The Statute addresses only Child Care Centers but from a policy perspective the regulations will be applicable for all licensed child care providers. Pertaining to healthy eating, Madie Green a Family Child Care Provider shared with the committee that is challenging to get some families to comply with healthy eating habit as there is no regulations in place to enforce healthy eating.</p> <p>Liz noted that this year (2014), marks the fourth year of Let's Move Campaign, a Michelle Obama's Initiative. This initiative is being promoted through Maryland EXCELS and continues to encourage child care providers to participate. It was also mentioned that Michelle Obama will be visiting one of the child care facilities operated by La Petite Academy in Bowie, Maryland. All of the La Petite child care facilities are participating in the Let's Move Campaign as part of their core policy.</p> <p>HB461 – State Early Childhood Advisory Council</p> <p>Linda Zang, Collaboration and Program Improvement Branch Chief, shared that there were many changes to the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECAC) State Advisory Council Bill that had not been communicated with the Department and will negatively impact on the Council makeup. There was a major change in the number of representatives per category. Meetings are being held by some Associations in effort to present testimonies to the Senate as amendments on the Council's behalf.</p> <p><i>SB332/HB297 – Pre-Kindergarten Expansion Act of 2014</i></p> <p>Rolf reported that there was unanimous support in the Senate for SB 332/HB 297. He noted that this Bill would build on MSDE's existing infrastructure for Pre-Kindergarten. These include public schools, pre-kindergarten programs as well as recommendations from the taskforce on universal pre-school education. Rolf said that there was a positive demonstration at the Hearing recently with regard to the Bill – indicating the commitment of the Administration. He said Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown has taken the lead and all major constituency groups are embracing the Bill. According to feedback, the Bill is expected to be signed by the Governor in May 2014.</p> <p>In the interim, the Division of Early Childhood Development (DECD) has been charged with implementing this grant program. Rolf noted that there will be some work conducted before the Request for Proposal (RFP) including conducting a survey on all Check Level Five Programs participating in Maryland EXCELS. The objective is to find out if they are equipped to participate in such competition. As part of the RFP, a deadline to submit Letter of Intent will be built in the process. The goal of the letter is to find out the interest level that exists specifically for community based programs to sign on to Pre-School for All Pilot Sites.</p> <p>The RFP will have three modules. The first module will be for qualified vendors consisting of community based programs that are licensed and accredited either by the State or a national organization and are eligible for submitting an application which will include a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local school system. Rolf said that it is similar to what currently exist with the pilot sites. The second module will be for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to</p>

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	<p>submit applications for taking a half day prekindergarten program and extending the hours to a full day. The third module will be an opportunity for LEAs to come in with a Judy Center proposal.</p> <p>Rolf said that the reason the Letter of Intent was chosen because DECD can engage the interest of the school systems. He noted that currently, there is no knowledge of the level of interest in the licensed community for such a program. Under the Race to the Top (RTTT) RFP, very few programs responded so the team could not decipher the level of interest.</p> <p>According to Rolf, Pre-Kindergarten programs embedded in child care centers, head-start programs or nursery schools and are available for families whose income is 300% or below the Federal poverty guideline (\$58,500 for a family of three to have access free of charge to pre-kindergarten). A tuition break of 20% will be given to families that have half-day arrangement and for those that have a full day arrangement of six and half hours, 40% of tuition break will be given.</p> <p><i>Question: Will this be mandatory like kindergarten and how will this affect providers who have pre-kindergarten in their programs?</i></p> <p><i>Rolf's Response:</i> This is a voluntary program. It is mandatory for local school systems to offer the services for economically disadvantaged four years old children in the public schools. An amount of \$4.3m was allocated Statewide so approximately 1,500 – 1,600 children will be benefited. Rolf noted that the program is expected to rollout in by Fall 2014. He said the RFP is a State investment in a classroom of 20 children and any of the pilot sites with the income eligibility. Once the school has a grant, then children can be in different a class which is advisable. As soon the RFP is issued with the Letter of Intent an orientation exercise will be conducted with interested personnel where information will be disseminated and questions/concerns will be addressed.</p>
<p>Child Care Subsidy Branch Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Management RFP 	<p>Child Care Subsidy Branch Chief, Betsy Blair, provided an update on privatizing Child Care Subsidy eligibility determination as mentioned at the last OCC Advisory Council meeting February 27, 2014. She stated that this change will give MSDE accountability for the work being done for eligibility and case management.</p> <p>The proposals were reviewed, a vendor has been recommended but the name will not be disclosed until it goes through the Board of Public Works process which is on the agenda for March 19, 2014. After which, the Branch will start the transition process from the Local Department of Social Services to the private vendor. She said the vendor will take over the eligibility process for case management for customers. Full implementation will begin July 1, 2014. Betsy further explained that it will be an all-inclusive entity which means that all aspects of eligibility will be taken care of by the vendor such as re-determinations, interim charges as well as any customer service issues, appeals, staff training and so on. It was emphasized that none of the processes will be done by Department of Human Resources (DHR) after the process is fully implemented.</p> <p><i>Question: Will there still be a hotline for providers?</i></p> <p><i>Betsy's Response:</i> There will be a hotline for customers similar to the one that currently exists for providers where they will provide their identification number to find out the progress on their applications.</p>

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	<p><i>Question: Will this be done electronically through the public portal?</i> <i>Betsy's Response:</i> These are two separate initiatives. The electronic process will be done through the public portal for CCATS which will be implemented within a year. This will allow customers to apply and setup their attendance online.</p> <p><i>Question: How will you communicate this change?</i> <i>Betsy's Response:</i> As part of the contract, Consumer Education personnel will be hired to do outreach and consumer education to inform parents and providers on an ongoing basis. The public campaign will include posters, magnets, and postcards to name a few means of communication that will be available in English and Spanish. Betsy noted that this will be a cultural change for parents in that they will be getting information in a different way and place. The aim is also to reach out to Provider Associations so that everyone will be informed.</p> <p><i>Question: In 2005/2006 when decisions were being made to move everything from DHR to MSDE during the public hearing, it was revealed that one of the reasons for the move was that most parents did not apply through a DSS Office they do it by mail. Is that still the case?</i> <i>Betsy's Response:</i> Yes, it is still the case. It is not required by CCDF rules to have a face-to-face interview. As soon as the opportunity was granted, the decision was made to allow parents to submit information via mail so as not to disrupt their activity (school, job training, job). Hence all the programs are done by mail. If TCA customers still require a face-to-face meeting, they would have to go to the local department which is a requirement for TCA but they can still complete the subsidy application and send it to the vendor.</p> <p><i>Question: Did you say the Payment Vendor and the Eligibility Vendor are two different people or both the same?</i> <i>Betsy's Response:</i> We cannot give an answer because a vendor is not yet contracted.</p> <p><i>Question: Who can be present at the Board of Public Works meeting?</i> <i>Liz's Response:</i> It is an open meeting so anyone may attend.</p> <p>Betsy stated that plans are in process for the transition and implementation and noted that the team is not just sitting idly waiting for the release of the vendor.</p> <p><i>Question: At the Family Investment and Administration Hearing recently held, there were some suggestions from DHR team and the Committee to delay in the process. Will that happen?</i> <i>Liz's Response:</i> There were testimonies in the FIA budget analysis. Betsy and I attended those sessions to be reliably informed on how to respond to questions. There was some misunderstanding by the Committees as to the owner of the program. There was some education awareness that needed to be done and Secretary Dallas did a wonderful job explaining the relationship. There were also budget language that would require DHR and MSDE to submit a report about the effects of the transfer. There were many unanswered questions. It was also outlined in the budget plan that a report should be submitted by July 1, 2014 but the DHR requested the date be delayed until December 2014 since the implementation process will begin</p>

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	<p>July 1, 2014.</p> <p>DHR believed, according to the testimonies that Secretary Dallas gave that this will be in the best interest of the families and also their staff because they have other programs that they have to manage. According to the Legislative Analyst the concern was whether or not this change will benefit the State. It was hoped that the MSDE team will be able to answer these questions in a positive manner.</p> <p><i>Question: When the system is fully managed by MSDE, will the criteria with regard families' income remain the same?</i></p> <p><i>Betsy's Response:</i> Yes, all the guidelines remain the same (income guidelines, the requirements etc.) according to the regulations. One of the advantages of the contract, should it be signed by the chosen vendor, is that although the local department has 30 days to make a decision, the vendor will have 15 days per the agreement.</p> <p>Betsy emphatically stated to the Council that come July 1, 2014 it will be chaotic but assured all that if given three months, customers will receive maximum satisfaction. It was also further emphasized that consumer awareness will be rolled-out in two phases: phase one will be about change and phase two will be about instructions. This will be done throughout the transition period.</p> <p>Criminal Background Checks for Informal Providers</p> <p>Betsy stated that the Child Care Subsidy Branch started collecting information concerning criminal background checks for informal providers and the reports are due back to the Branch by March 1, 2014. Approximately 1,200 providers were notified January 2014 that, if they or an associated party are in their house during the hours of child care, they need to have a criminal background check completed. Betsy said she was encouraged by the responses received to date. She said March 1st will be a soft date because the requirement is not yet in COMAR. Providers need to comply with the requirement but there is more flexibility with regard to time. Therefore providers will not be cut-off abruptly if they need more time to comply.</p> <p><i>Question: Only criminal background checks will be done for informal providers?</i></p> <p><i>Betsy's Response:</i> The Federal Government wants to put some additional requirements on informal providers so training is being considered for them. The objective is not to flood them with too many requirements at the same time. Hence the team opted to start with criminal background check because it seemed most important at this time.</p> <p>Liz informed the group that the proposed new rules for CCDF are still not finalized. She said that there will be a meeting during the second week in March, 2014 in Philadelphia where discussions will be held pertaining to the proposed rules. She said that some of the items that Betsy mentioned concerning informal providers such as monitoring, training requirements, criminal background checks, sex offender registry and so on will be addressed. Liz noted that there will not be many items to be modified in the regulations. The focus will be primarily on the informal child care provider community. It was also stated by Liz that the implementation of a monitoring system for informal providers will be a critical issue as it will increase the case load. She said a</p>

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	<p>decision will have to be reached with regard to whether or not the Licensing Branch would be responsible or it will be managed by a separate team.</p> <p>Betsy said that the team is also working with the Child and Adult Care Food Program. A list is given to them every month so that they can do outreach to the informal providers and encourage them to be a part of the program.</p> <p>Betsy told the meeting that Invoices for January 27th through to February 9th did not go out until the week of February 24th because of a problem within the CCATS system. She said MSDE does not have Listserv to send out information to providers if there are problem as described. She told the group sending an email to the OCC Advisory Council contact person would be helpful.</p>
<p>Licensing Branch Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immunization recommendations for child care staff 	<p>Liz shared with the team that there will be an article in the upcoming Partners' Newsletter based on a recommendation from CDC about immunization recommendations for adults who care for children in childcare settings. It is recommended that adults who work with children be immunized. Liz noted that it was a recommendation and not a requirement. It was emphasized by Edisa Padder, a Committee Member, that although immunization is not a requirement it is important that adults get immunized especially young adults.</p> <p><i>Question: Why was the requirement changed for TB test?</i> <i>Liz's response:</i> Each health department determines whether or not they will require such test. It is not mandatory from MSDE but if it is required by the local health department, recommended by a medical practitioner or the caregiver was exposed, the test must be done.</p> <p>It was mentioned by Liz that there is a posting in the Maryland Register concerning Regulations - the comment period ending March 10, 2014. It was noted that many of the changes addressed Montessori programs. Liz said in order to be called a Montessori program the institution has to meet a certain criteria which will be explicit in the regulations. Liz noted that there will be certain provisions with regard to the education requirements of staff employed in a Montessori programs. She also mentioned that information is available on napping arrangements for Montessori programs only.</p> <p>Changes in Family Child Care Regulations include information concerning a list of all the various crimes that were automatic exclusions. There have been hearings where this was an issue - a registration was revoked and because it was not stated that it was an automatic disclosure it became problematic. Therefore the decision was made to include all of the crimes in the regulations. Liz said that this is not a change in policy. It basically adding what is currently being done into the regulations. She noted that some of the definitions that currently exist will be eliminated under childcare definitions. Liz asked the Council members and any other interested party to forward any comments, concerns or recommendations to her office on the matter by March 10th.</p> <p>Liz announced to the Council that Mark McGinnity was recently named as Regional Manager for the Baltimore County Office. She said she has no doubt Mark will be an excellent manager based on his involvement and experience. She also stated that there is a job opening in the Prince Georges County, as Sharon Chester retired. Paula Johnson, Branch Chief for Licensing is providing supervision for the office.</p>

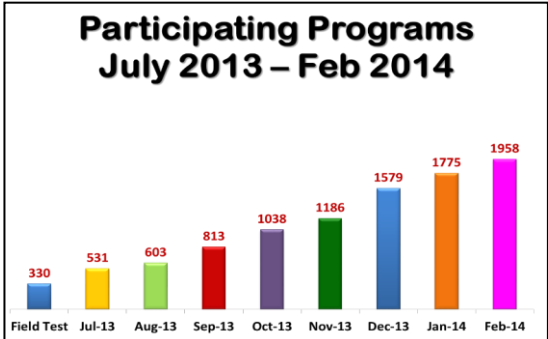
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Maryland EXCELS Branch Updates

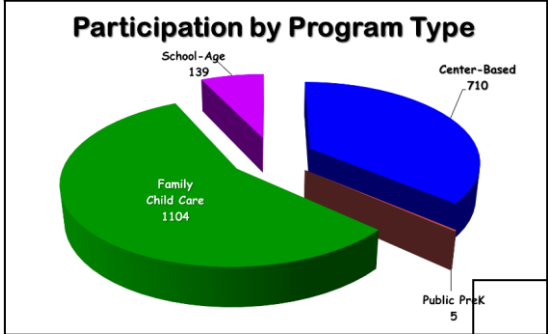
- Participation
- Revised Standards and Website
- Outreach

DISCUSSION OUTCOME

Maryland EXCELS Updates- Lindi Budd, Branch Chief and Jamie Ekatomatis, Outreach & Communications Specialist

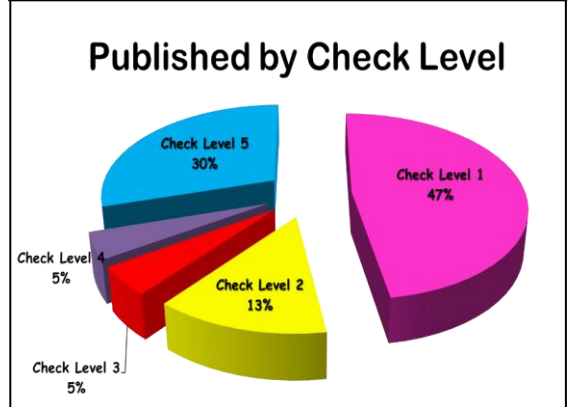
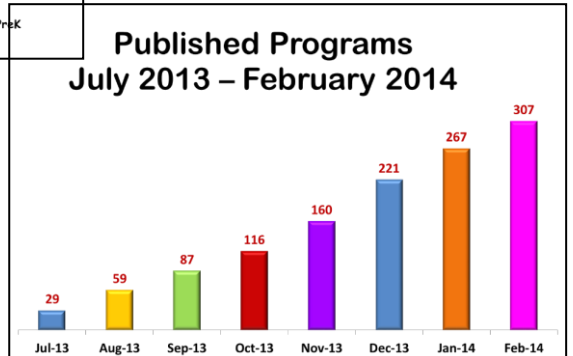


The chart outlines the number of programs participating in Maryland EXCELS since the Field Test up to February 2014.



The pie chart gives a breakdown of the various types and the number of programs that are participating in Maryland EXCELS up to February 2014.

The chart represents the number of number of programs that published their ratings since the Field Test up to February 2014.



The pie chart describes the various check levels of programs (%) that are participating in Maryland EXCELS up to February 2014.

Lindi shared the following updates

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisions to the Maryland EXCELS Standards have been completed and will be uploaded to the website. The revision was done based on feedback from the field test and from programs that have been participating since then. The reviews were treated as clarifications of what was rolled-out in July, 2013 so as to make the information more clear for programs to understand with regard to the documentation that was required as well as taking in to consideration what impacted children's experiences in the classroom were easier to find. • On March 3, 2014, Maryland EXCELS website will be under construction hence it will be closed to the public. All the participating programs were notified. There will be some new features/enhancements to the website. The revised Maryland EXCELS Standards will also be uploaded to the website on March 3rd. New features to the system will include text support (24 hours and 7 days per week). This feature will be available by April 2014, to providers with system issues. • Training will be conducted on March 4, 2014 at CTE for Quality Assurance Specialists (QAS) and Resource and Referrals staff (R and Rs). The objective is to take a closer look at what revised Standards entail and how it will assist programs and providers. • Programs that are still working toward publishing under the old Standards will still be able to do so up until July 1, 2014. • Hiring for Maryland EXCELS Branch has been completed. There are 15 QAS across the State that are working closely with the R and Rs and the Break-Through Centers Staff to get the word out to programs especially those in Title One School Districts (high need children) into Maryland EXCELS. • Takeisha Edmonds is the new Quality Measurement Specialist. Her role is to train and prepare assessors that work with Maryland EXCELS programs ready to go out in the field to do assessments as needed. There is a pool of 29 assessors for which training is scheduled on March 13, 2014 followed by site visits to get them to reliability status with the State Anchors. • CLASS Training for CLASS Assessors will take place in April 2014 at Johns Hopkins (CTE). • There are many programs that are uploading documents that opted not to publish their rating yet as they want to publish at a higher level and they have twelve months to do so. • The verification of ratings will be done at QAS level as well as the administrative level at MSDE -Maryland EXCELS Branch so the wait for programs to be published will be much shorter as eight QASs will be verifying documents. When the Program Coordinators (PCs) from CTE indicate (via the website) that a program is ready to publish, a Maryland EXCELS staff will be prompted by way of the website, who will verify the documentation and publish the program. • The team is currently finalizing the Monitoring Plan for published programs. The pilot phase for monitoring programs will begin in March and will be rolled-out later on. This is to ensure that the documents that were provided by the programs are being used in the program. The aim of the monitoring process is to verify the documents that were submitted and to offer support as needed to programs. • The feedback from Subsidy outreach is quite positive based on the number of programs that are registering with Maryland EXCELS. Programs that accept reimbursements will need to register and submit their applications to Maryland EXCELS January 1, 2015 in order to receive subsidy. Programs are receiving inserts from Maryland EXCELS every

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	<p>time they get their subsidy invoices. The objective is not overwhelmed parents/providers with information so the dissemination of information will be done in phases. As the deadline gets closer the team will be reaching out to families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emphasis will be on the January 1, 2015 programs should submit their application and Publishing their ratings within 12 months of your acceptance to Maryland EXCELS as noted by Jamie. • The Maryland EXCELS certificates were modified based on feedback from the field test and providers. There is a new certificate for programs that are participating at Check Level 5 which will read <i>Highest Quality Rating</i> and Check Levels 1 – 4 certificates will read <i>Quality Rated Program</i> with a State Seal. • Jamie shared with the meeting that the QAS in tandem with R and Rs as well as other groups across the State will be doing Sign-up Sessions at community colleges, conferences and so on to promote Maryland EXCELS. The main focus will be on programs that are receiving subsidy and accredited programs.
<p>Credentialing Branch Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credentialing Modification 	<p>Liz reported that the Credentialing modification is moving forward. She noted that the regulations are currently at the draft stage. Liz said there will be some minor changes in each of the levels such as the time for submitting for training reimbursement. As soon as they are completed they will be distributed core of people for feedback.</p> <p>The Branch is still working with a backlog of applications. There has been a huge influx of applications because of high demand due to Maryland EXCELS. Currently, the Branch is developing strategies to find a feasible solution so that applications can be processed in a more timely and effective way.</p> <p>Work is being done on the data system to be aligned to the business rules. Work is also being done on the public portal which will alleviate some of the current challenges and the bonus payments that are currently being processed outside of the system. Once all these systems issues are improved, applications should be able to be processed in a more timely manner.</p> <p>Discussion is being held with regard to establishing a Help Line similar to the invoice processing for Credentialing.</p>
<p>Updates</p>	<p>Announcements of various events were made by the committee members as well as guests.</p>
<p>Adjournment</p>	<p>The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:50 am.</p>
<p>Next Meeting</p>	<p>Thursday, May 15, 2013 10:00 am – 12:00 Noon @ MSDE, 8th Floor Conference Room 6</p>