



**Office of Child Care (OCC) Advisory Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 28, 2013**



AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION OUTCOME
Attendees	<p><b>Council Members:</b> Jennifer Nizer, Mary Coster, Tracy Jost, Debbie Moore, Judy Kalski, Rachel London, Lee Kingham, Christina Peusch, Cathy Dougherty, Kate Garvey, Crystal Barksdale</p> <p><b>MSDE Staff:</b> Liz Kelley, Rolf Grafwallner, Lindi Budd, Roann Tsakalas</p> <p><b>Guests:</b> Lynda Davenport,</p>
Welcome And Opening Remarks	<p>The meeting was called to order by Jennifer Nizer. Liz welcomed everyone and announced to the Council that Lindi Budd had been promoted to Maryland EXCELS as Branch Chief and Jena Smith to the Quality Assurance Specialist Supervisor for Maryland EXCELS. Liz, Council Members and Guests congratulated both ladies on their promotions.</p>
Assistant Superintendent/Director's Report – Rolf Grafwallner and Liz Kelley	<p><b>School Readiness Report - State Board Briefing</b></p> <p>Rolf reported that at the State Board Briefing they were very supportive and had good questions. He pointed out that aside from the report he presented was a summary report of what was done for the state and the county along with introductory narrative. He state that the Division had compiled a technical report which is available online and that everyone should log on to retrieve the invaluable information included in the tables that capture the results in the actual numbers and in percentage.</p> <p>He also mentioned that there are some good comparative data over the last two years that was broken down by the sub-groups which was more detailed than the summary report.</p> <p>Rolf recognized Ready at Five for a magnificent job over the years in disseminating the publications to stakeholders. He stated that fifteen thousand (15,000) publications were sent out to all the principals, the Governor's office, Joint Committee for Children, other agencies as well as the child care providers community and Head Start programs.</p> <p>Rolf pointed out the overall result of 82% of our children being fully ready which is a slippage of approximately 1% (actually 0.8%). He said although the slippage was minor it should not be overlooked as the trend was broken. He also stated that this was the first time the division has seen a flattening of the data of</p>

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	<p>composites scores for the domains.</p> <p>He revealed that one factor that caused the slippage was as a result of an increase of 2,000 children enrolled in Kindergarten. He stated that there are approximately 67,000 children in kindergarten and there are 1,400 more children that are ready this year. It could be concluded that this cohort as a whole is doing better than last year's cohort but in terms of percentages there was a slight decrease.</p> <p>Rolf shared details about various jurisdictions throughout the State breaking down the data to emphasize improvements and areas of need. He reported that the Advisory Council in Baltimore City is currently creating an assessment to identify weak spots to build on their success but overall they have a good trend going.</p> <p>Rolf said in relation to transparency, our RTT projection for school readiness is off the mark by 2%. It was projected to be at 84% on the composite and 74% on language and literacy which resulted in a variance of 2%. He said this will result in doubling our efforts because next year the projection will be 88% of the composite.</p> <p>Tracy Jost asked Rolf if the Common Core Curriculum will be fully implemented next year across the State and he said yes it will be implemented.</p> <p>Tracy asked if there may be an increase with Common Core Curriculum or there might be a slight decrease because of the requirements. Rolf responded that the current system will be used for one more year and then the new one will start in 2014. He further mentioned that the staff and trainers have to be cognizant of the fact that unfortunately, for teachers it will be almost a double standard as the benchmarks that are built are not Common Core standards yet until 2014. Teachers will have to use the existing benchmark that was built in with the work sampling because that will be replaced by a newly developed assessment which is more closely aligned to Common Core and by then the change will be visible. Rolf made it clear that there will be enough outreach for people to understand this newly developed system. Rolf agreed with Liz who said this will be more like a re-norming process similar to the SAT.</p> <p>On the school readiness gap we have made progress with low income children</p>

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	<p>to narrow that gap by 7% from 18 to 11 points. For English Language Learners there was a narrowing by 8% from 2004 to 2012 and for that same period there was a widening for children with disabilities by 3%. It was believed based of the findings presented by Rolf that the focus should be on children with disabilities. He said that the strategy that will be used to address this need comprised three major themes be used: (1) focusing on academic risk factors which means getting kids to participate in high quality programs which is what Maryland EXCELS is all about (2) strengthening teaching and learning for young children through classroom or program based improvements and (3) professional development; using those new expectations that are out there in making sure the target group are children who may not have these types of classroom environments. He also stated that engaging families in communities to support children's school readiness is also a focus. He pointed out that there was an established coalition that includes the libraries, pediatricians involved in early literacy and efforts are on the way to get the community groups involved as well as the local councils.</p> <p>He expressed that it was critical for families to seek high quality programs for their children because the data and focus group information that was received outlined that it is not a high priority for families especially low income families.</p> <p>Mary Coster asked how high quality programs are to be marketed as it is believed that this was a weakness for all. Rolf responded that there are a number of strategies in place where it can be handled administratively through the Child Care Subsidy program. He said this is where the greatest chance exists for families to choose quality programs. He pointed out that Maryland EXCELS will also be an avenue to market high quality programs.</p> <p>Liz said that some of the marketing strategies include providing information to families when they are applying for child care subsidy not just to ask parents where you want to have care but to present them with quality rated child care centers and homes. Liz also spoke about a collaborative effort between Maryland EXCELS and CTE to develop a marketing campaign. A video clip was being developed to target both families and providers.</p> <p>Another strategy mentioned by Liz was tiered reimbursement. She explained that if a parent chooses higher level quality care, the voucher will be worth more decreasing the differential between the market rate and what the voucher</p>

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	<p>covers, the parent will benefit knowing that the voucher will pay more toward the actual care of care.</p> <p>Lynda Davenport stated that there are families in her community that would want to place their children in a high quality child care but cannot afford it because of low income as they cannot afford the differential co-pay.</p> <p>Lee Ann Kingham said that it is also difficult for even middle income families to pay for high quality child care.</p> <p>In response to quality child care, Rolf gave a brief synopsis of a Federal research project that was funded approximately three years ago on the relationship of child care subsidy and school readiness that was done with Child Trends. He said the department posted six briefs on the Division of Early Childhood Development (DECD) website. One of the six briefs dealt with families that are receiving or eligible for child care subsidy which addressed the question as to what drives the decision on care. He said the information is very good and encouraged the group to tap into the resources available posted online.</p> <p>It was also mentioned that some of problems encountered by low income families are transportation and inconsistent work hours unlike middle income families.</p> <p>Lee Ann inquired if there was any data available that showed the impact of programs that are accredited or receiving bonuses on school readiness statistics. Rolf said there are over 1,000 accredited programs state or nationally accredited but currently there is no access to enrollment information. He said to get the enrollment information, a system has to be implemented which is part of the Division's long term goal. He said the proposed system will have the ability to pull together information from different sources including an enrollment and attendance reporting system and eventually over the next few years a database will be able to 'track' where children have been in care. Having such a system, the Division will be able to relate any interventions and support for these children from infancy through grade 12.</p> <p>Liz said that the Department will be testing an automated system to generate reports and attendance for child care subsidy which will be on the public portal</p>

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	<p>of CCATS. This will be started with Maryland EXCELS participating facilities and then branch out to the public in general.</p> <p>She said in the future child care providers will be required to use this system to upload information about children who are enrolled in their programs. There will be a wealth of information that will be able to drive quality and decision making. Before the system is rolled out a pilot test will be done in different phases to test its strengths and weaknesses as well as its validity and reliability.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Staffing</li> <li>➤ Annual Performance Report – Year One</li> <li>➤ Redwood Satellite Office</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staffing</b> Liz reported that an additional nine (9) Quality Assurance Specialists (QAS) will be joining the existing six (6) QASs. She told the group that interviews were scheduled April 1 and 2, 2013. She further mentioned that they will be stationed around the State. One will be in each regional office to provide support; first to the field test facilities which will be concluded in May 2013 and then they will target child care providers who are in Title One School catchment areas; providers who have a large number of subsidy children (based on data retrieved from the CCATS system) and any other program that indicates an interest in participating in Maryland EXCELS.</p> <p>Liz also shared that interviews were in progress for an Outreach position. She stated that the position required someone who can help with publications. The office is also interviewing for a new position called Quality Measurement Specialist for the Maryland EXCELS branch. Liz noted that there are a number of measurement tools including the Environment Rating Scales (ERS), Program Administration Scale (PAS), Business Administration Scale (BAS), and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) that are utilized in Maryland EXCELS. The Quality Measurement Specialist will focus on coordinating and training people to use these scales to conduct assessments and observations for various facilities.</p> <p>Liz stressed that her office was grateful for the Head Start Program specifically to Angela Card for providing CLASS training for Quality Assurance Specialists (QAS).</p> <p>Mary Coster asked if Patty Aburn will be working in the Credentialing Branch. Liz responded that Patty is a Quality Assurance Specialist and that her core function is to provide support to Baltimore City. She further explained the both</p>

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	<p>Patty and Lisa Smith are working in the Baltimore City and County region as well as Harford and Cecil Counties. She pointed out that additional QASs will be hired for Harford/Cecil County, Baltimore City as well as Baltimore County because of the number of providers in these areas.</p> <p>Liz stated that Patty is also the liaison for facilities participating in Maryland EXCELS and the Credentialing branch. Patty was brought on to learn the Credentialing program and basically be the "trouble shooter" for Maryland EXCELS to deal with providers' issues related to Credentialing. It was stated that Patty will not independently resolve issues but work with the Credentialing team who is responsible for making the determinations.</p> <p>Lindi mentioned that the Maryland EXCELS updates (January and February 2013) are posted on the MSDE website but have been included in the packets in print form for everyone in the meeting. She noted that contact information for all QASs was outlined in the January update.</p> <p>Jenn Nizer asked who will take Jena's place as the Training Coordinator. Liz stated that work was in progress to get the position filled. She expressed that Jena is currently working in both positions and she will continue to oversee the training approval process until someone can be hired. It was also noted that Jena is training Levette Woodrum to do the Credentialing voucher reimbursements. Liz noted that Jena is still the contact person until a replacement is found.</p> <p>Liz highlighted that the challenges encountered in filling these positions were that Lindi and Jena were upgraded in their Personal Identification Number (PIN). She stated that since no new State PINs were issued for these promotions, their now vacated positions will be filled by contractual employees.</p> <p>Christina Peusch asked if the Head Start Program trained all six (6) QASs in CLASS training and if the QASs were already trained for Maryland EXCELS. In response, Liz stated that training is being done in two segments; half of the group was currently in training (3 days) and the other half will be in trained in April 2013. She also confirmed that the QASs are already trained in Maryland EXCELS and this new training was centered solely on CLASS.</p> <p><a href="#">RTT-ELC Annual Performance Report – Year One</a></p>

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	<p>Liz stated that Division must submit an Annual Performance Report on the RTT projects to the Federal Government. She announced that this goal was successfully achieved within the established time and will be later available on the Office of Child Care (OCC) website.</p> <p><b>Redwood Satellite Office</b></p> <p>A new satellite office has been established at 306 West Redwood Street on the ground floor. She told the Council that two branches of the OCC are now located in this office-the Licensing branch (Paula Johnson, Martia Rodgers, Lisa McDonald and Chery Hall), and the new Maryland EXCELS branch (Lindi Mitchell Budd, Hyacinth Facey-Palmer, Jena Smith, and Audrey Smith (who was formerly in Linda Zang's branch but has been reassigned to this office as she oversee the BAS and PAS which is aligned more closely with Maryland EXCELS). There will be an open-house after Lindi and Jena move over to the Redwood office.</p>
Budget Hearing	<p><b>Budget Hearing</b></p> <p>The budget hearings had gone smoothly with the little response needed to the analysts' comments. Liz thanked persons who came out and testified for the budget. It was problem free this year as there were no cuts but there were some recommendations. These will be responded to in the near future. It is hoped that there may be additional funds identified in the supplemental budget.</p>
Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan	<p><b>Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan</b></p> <p>There are some changes, mostly things to have to report on. Liz made an official notification to the Council to provide feedback and comments on the Plan. She encouraged everyone to put their comments together based on the pre-print. She said the final plan will not be issued until very close to time. She pointed out that the Federal CCDF team had color coded the newly added information which made it very easy to see where changes had been made.</p> <p>Jenn Nizer asked if there was anything Liz would like the Council members to comment on. In response Liz said the subsidy section would be a good area of focus as it is likely the section where the majority of the comments will come from. She noted that there are some changes in the language specifically around informal child care. She also stated that in each of the sections the State</p>

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	<p>is asked set goals; although not a requirement, it would be good to receive comments on what goals the Council thinks would be good to include. Liz told the group that they can access the current CCDF State Plan on the website to see the goals that had been included and if there are additional goals that should be incorporated.</p> <p>Kate Garvey asked if there was a deadline to get the comments in. Liz said that no deadline was set yet but it should be somewhere between the end of April or mid-May. She further mentioned that a schedule was not yet done for the public hearing which will allow people to have the opportunity to provide in-person comment on the Plan.</p> <p>As observed by Liz there has been no significant changes to the plan over the years. There are three sections: Administration of Programs, Licensing, Subsidy and Quality.</p> <p>Liz said the CCDF team has been holding conference calls but unfortunately because of her schedule she didn't get to participate in all of the calls but other staff have listened in on the conference to point out some of the changes. The department has been proactive over the years in devising strategic goals and as such there will be little or no difficulty responding to the changes.</p>
<p><b>Legislation</b> – for more information visit: <a href="http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/firm1st.aspx?tab=home">http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/firm1st.aspx?tab=home</a></p>	<p><b>Legislation</b></p> <p>Liz, with Debbie Moore's assistance, reported on the following bills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Sex Offender Registry Bill which is House Bill (has house hearing) 442 and Senate Bill (has no house hearing) 415 were cross filed and passed unanimously by the chambers. Liz said there was no unforeseen problem with the bill as it was about putting into law what was already being practiced such as checking the sex offender registry and cross checking it with child care providers to ensure that that there are no child offenders living in a home, a center or in a multiuse building.</li> <li>✓ Criminal History checks for Informal Child Care Providers Bill. She said currently the department does not have the authority to conduct criminal background checks for informal providers; however this may very soon be a reality. Senate Bill 413 and House Bill 443 have been passed by the chambers and will have the hearing the afternoon of March 28, 2013.</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Child Care Dispute resolution, House Bill 932 and Senate Bill 832 will establish a work group to develop policies and procedures and make recommendations for hearing disputes when a family has an issue around discrimination based on special needs. Liz stated that the department will be working with the Disabilities Council and committee members to come up with a process to ensure child care providers are accommodating children appropriately and not barring them because of special needs concerns. The bill was passed by both chambers with amendments that were accepted by the Department. Debbie Moore informed the group that the senate bill for Dispute Resolution is scheduled to have a hearing with the government operational committee on April 4, 2013. Liz said if the bill does not move forward a work group would still be formed to move forward with the process.</li> <li>✓ House Bill 403 that would increase the number of children under the age of two from two to three in family child care homes was withdrawn because of strong opposition to the bill.</li> <li>✓ The Lawn Care Pesticide bill has not moved forward, but will be up for conversation.</li> </ul>
<p>Updates</p>	<p><b>UPDATES - Liz</b></p> <p><b>Child Care Subsidy Branch:</b> Liz stated that all but the two highest levels of Child Care Subsidy eligibility have opened.</p> <p>The regulations for Child Care Subsidy will be opened for review and revision. The strategy will be similar to what was done several years ago with the Licensing regulations that were revamped and rewritten. Liz said the move to open the regulations is two-fold, the regulations have been modified and 'patched' over the years so that the regulations have become difficult to follow, and the department has lost several hearings due to ambiguities in the regulations. Hence a decision was made to close up the loop holes. Liz stated that the workgroup will also be charged with improving how the regulations are organized and including appropriate policies and procedures now captured in Action Transmittals. No timeline was established yet as the team is currently holding meetings to decide how to approach this task.</p> <p><b>Credentialing Branch:</b> The Credentialing Modification is still on-going. The team is currently working with the CCATS developers to improve the system. This basically means bringing CCATS up to our business practices in testing. We hope that by the end of 2013 the system will be fully operational which will relieve a lot of the backlogs and problems encountered by the Credentialing unit.</p>

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	<p><b>Licensing Branch:</b> The branch is improving and becoming more consistent. The team is in the planning phase of the annual state wide Licensing meeting in October 2013 where all staff come together to discuss Statewide policies with Liz, Paula and others. The goal of the meeting is to have all the licensing staff meet face to face with management. Liz stated that this is a time that she and Paula have with all staff present to cover items of consistency and regulation interpretation. Lindi said in the Partners' Newsletter (Spring Edition 2013), a doodle poll was submitted by the Licensing branch and the hyperlink will be disseminated to everyone.</p> <p>Mary said for the meeting coming up in October it was important to focus on a strength-based strategy to ask licensing specialists since such mediation will be in place. She said items could be developed to ask Licensing Specialists questions such as what do you think you need to support the group you work with in the field to assist caring for children with disabilities? As opposed to what they are not doing... say what do you need? Liz believed that the outcome form these questions will result in identifying training needs. It was suggested that a checklist could be developed to help the specialist with the process.</p> <p><b>Maryland EXCELS Branch:</b> The field test will be officially finished at the end of May after which information will be collected to make any adjustments before the statewide launch in July. All of the levels for facilities who have been participating in Maryland EXCELS field test will be posted in July and participants will receive a bonus retroactively.</p> <p>There have been focus group meetings with field test facilities. Liz was enthused with the feedback received from providers who are participating in the field test. Tracy Jost shared how a parent wanted to know which centers in Prince George's County have the highest check levels in Maryland EXCELS which is great news to the Council.</p> <p>There are 323 participating facilities in the field test. It was noted that there was a struggle to engage Public Pre-K classrooms from across the State. Jenn Nizer asked why Public Pre-Ks are expected to be in Maryland EXCELS. In response to the question Liz said because the RTT Early Learning Challenge Application required that all programs be included in the scope of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). She said while no facilities are compelled to participate in Maryland EXCELS, provision is made to give them the opportunity to participate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ One of the goals for the next round of Judy Center Partnership Grants is to ensure that schools that receive grants participate in Maryland EXCELS moving forward.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ On-going training will be done for providers so that they can clearly understand the objectives of Maryland EXCELS. Most of the committee members said they have been advertising for Maryland EXCELS at conferences and other public events. Lindi and Liz said the QAS and Partners newsletter are the main vehicles used to reach providers but more will be done to reach them.</li>   <li>✓ It was said that some providers don't see themselves as business people or a part of the early childhood education continuum. They see themselves as a mom or a sitter and as such it is very difficult to reach them.</li>   <li>✓ A small work group will be formed to develop recommendations and timeline for providers who are accepting child care subsidy to be in Maryland EXCELS.</li>   <li>✓ The QRIS work group was reconvened; a smaller group than was anticipated but the discussions were quite fruitful. Questions were asked about how to proceed with various initiatives. The group evaluated the current status and sought agreement on some additional items that need to move forward; these include Additional Recognitions formerly Endorsements or Designations. These are those items that are not specifically in the standards' criteria for Maryland EXCELS they are either a support or in addition to those criteria. Currently, there is Asthma Friendly Child Care Environment that facilities' can receive as a designation; Health and Wellness which can be met by participating in Let's Move Child Care or NAP SACC which is the nutritional and physical activities self-assessment for child care.</li>   <li>✓ It was mentioned that Asthma Friendly Child Care Environment and Health and Wellness will receive recognition that can be posted/displayed/downloaded/printed. It was noted that this information was developed specifically for parents. Hence a system has to be established with regard to verification and validation in relation to recognizing such environments.</li>   <li>✓ The group was informed that a dual language work group and the inclusive environment may merge based on discussion outcome. Lindi shared that communication is in progress to collaborate with Northampton Community College in Pennsylvania to build an inclusive child care which is a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) kind of checklist approach. She said that the checklist seemed to be designed for center based only which would be inadequate as one is needed for family as well.</li> </ul>

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The next meeting Date	May 16, 2013 10 a.m. – 12 Noon at Maryland State Department of Education, 200 W. Baltimore Street, 8 <sup>th</sup> floor, Conference Room 6 Baltimore MD 21201.