



State Early Childhood Advisory Council

May 8, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Agenda Topic	Discussion Summary	Action Needed	Due Date
<p>Welcome / Introductions and Announcements</p>	<p>Steven Hicks opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and said it was a very important day for everyone to attend. He said we are already working with information gathered at the Regional Town Halls.</p> <p>The Maryland Department of Health, the Department of Human Services and MSDE are all attending the meetings. He said if anyone has not yet attended any of the Town Halls, he wanted to encourage them to do so. The meetings so far have all been great and very informative.</p> <p>Steven asked everyone to give Howard County Public Schools a round of applause in appreciation for the room space for the meeting.</p> <p>Everyone was asked to introduce themselves and say what organization they were representing and if they are an official member of the Council. After introductions were complete, Steven said he was very excited at the array of organizations represented at the meeting. He said it is critical to have this type of representation as we work together to improve the lives of children.</p>		
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<p>Presentation – Preschool Development Block Grant B-5 Needs Assessment – Charo Basterra and Kasia Razynska</p>	<p>Charo Basterra opened up the presentation by offering some background information on MAEC. They were originally called the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium. They have expanded quite a bit since their beginnings. They are one of four equity assistance centers in the Country.</p> <p>Vision – We envision the day when all students have equitable opportunities to learn and achieve at high levels.</p>		

	<p>Mission – Promoting excellence and equity in education to achieve social justice.</p> <p>They are working together with MSDE at the Regional Town Halls as part of a grant and also have project Café', a Family Engagement Initiative they are working on with MSDE's Division of Early Childhood Development.</p> <p>One of the things they are working on is a needs assessment that will help inform the Strategic Plan. This process includes document reviews, attending the Regional Town Hall meetings and discussions, developing, and gathering information on, a needs survey, and conducting Focus Groups that will be held in four different regions of Maryland to gather more data.</p> <p>Charo said she applauds Steven for making the survey available in multiple languages. She asked everyone to ensure the survey makes its way to as many people as possible, especially parents.</p> <p>Kasia is doing the document review. She said she really appreciates how data-rich Maryland is, and how well we are positioned to move Maryland forward.</p> <p>The document review consists of reviewing needs assessments, reports, research studies, Strategic Plan reviews, etc., for the last ten years. There are four main areas guiding the needs assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scope and access - If there are any barriers, do they show themselves in terms of scope and access? 2. Quality - What is the quality of programs across the state? 3. Transition - How are kids transitioning within programs, and to the formal education setting? 4. Coordination/collaboration – How are we, as a system, collaborating together? 5. Funding – This cuts across all of the other four main areas. It's not a research question, but it must be addressed. <p>We must define the following terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable populations – Our closest definition comes from the KRA and includes children from low-income families, English language learners, minority populations, children with special needs. Kasia asked the group if they knew of any other populations we should include and one suggestion was to include single-parent families • Quality – This is defined by the Maryland EXCELS program. • Rural populations - 		
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	<p>Maryland has a rich network of services offered to children based on their various needs. The majority of care providers for Maryland's children comes from child care centers and family child care homes. 46% of children are currently in an informal child care setting (either in their home or in unregulated child care arrangements).</p> <p>Someone asked about the difference between immigrant children and migrant children. Kasia explained that immigrant children have come with their families, who are planning to stay. Migrant children move with their parents as they move from place to place (typically for a season, or as work availability dictates). Migrant children can be a subset of immigrant children, but not necessarily.</p> <p>A child care desert, as defined by the Center for American Progress, is any census tract with more than 50 children under 5 that contains no child care providers. Access is dependent on where children live within Maryland.</p> <p>Access is also sometimes tough for vulnerable populations. Kasia mentioned Baltimore City as an example.</p> <p>Family child care providers are steadily decreasing in Maryland and are projected to decrease more. Some of the reasons for this have to do with the increasing cost of child care, child care is one of the biggest expenses for parents, child care regulations, and minimum wage.</p> <p>Steve Rohde pointed out that the decrease in family child care providers is a national trend and is not just limited to Maryland.</p> <p>Kasia said another problem is universal Pre-K. Infant care is the most expensive. Child care providers "pool" their costs and come up with an "average" cost of child care to offset the expenses of caring for infants. With universal Pre-K, more families are taking their older children out of child care and enrolling them in Pre-K settings. This leaves the provider with less funding available to cover the costs of infant care.</p> <p>Steven said, "Unless you create policies..." and Kasia said "Yes, but this is what is happening right now."</p> <p>With regard to quality, Kasia started out talking about best practices. She said Maryland really is very good about following best practices when it comes to quality. We have the KRA and we have Maryland EXCELS, so the system is there. She said one of the things they are finding is that there are so very few teachers at levels 5 and 6 of credentialing. She said this is a huge change in how we think about child care; this is where the provider needs a degree.</p>		
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We need to move from thinking of 'day' care, where you drop off your kids, to thinking of it as an educational environment. Low wages are a result of the first way of thinking, so we need to make sure we are thinking about child care as a professional environment. It is one of the lowest paid sectors.

A public school teachers makes about \$64,000 per year (give or take) for a ten-month contract. A preschool teacher, with the same qualifications, makes about \$48,000. A non-credentialed provider can make an average of \$19,000. This is not an income someone can live on in Maryland.

Maryland EXCELS is great, but is in its early stages of implementation. By county, there is a great difference in the quality, and the programs, that participate in EXCELS.

With regard to transitions, Kasia said more children are not kindergarten ready when they enter kindergarten than those who are ready. If you look at the data demographically, there are huge disparities – especially for vulnerable populations. 29% of Latino/Hispanic children enter kindergarten ready. 33% of low-income children are ready. 22% of English learners are ready.

One of the failings of our system is that we do not classify children as English language learners until they enter kindergarten. We cannot prepare for these children because we do not know who they are before they enter kindergarten. Since there is no assessment for them before they enter the school system, we cannot target them early as we can through the Infant and Toddler program. She said she is aware that MSDE is already working on ways to fix this and that is a wonderful thing; it will help the teachers better prepare for the individual needs of the children.

The average cost of care for infants is \$14,000 per year. In-state tuition at the University of MD is \$10,000. Parents are paying more, earlier in their lives, before they reach their full earning potential.

Steve, Johns Hopkins University, discussed the surveys. They have received over 450 surveys so far. (27 parents, 318 providers, 98 community partners). He asked that everyone share the survey wide and far, but especially with parents. The more information we can get, the better. (Please see flyer distributed during meeting for the QR code.) The survey is also available online <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/B2five>

Participants may take the survey multiple times. For example, if someone is a parent, but also a child care provider, they can answer the survey as a parent, and as a child care provider.

Carol discussed the focus groups they are planning to hold in four regional areas of the state. They are going to take the five areas Charo discussed earlier in the meeting to gather information from the community at large. She had the group separate into the areas in which they are most interested and develop questions we should ask of the different stakeholders.

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<p>Welcome – Dr. Carol Williamson, Deputy Superintendent, Office of Teaching and Learning</p>	<p>Dr. Williamson said she values these meetings and learns so much from them. She said this is a piece of what she does but it is a very important piece of what she does.</p> <p>Dr. Williamson apologized to the group for not being present for the morning portion of the meeting and explained that she was at an Employee Recognition event celebrating state employees who have been employed for 25 years or more. She also acknowledged several people within the Division of Early Childhood, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacqueline Blanding (Office of Licensing) – 45 years • Suzanne Ruark (Office of Licensing) - 45 years • Louis Valenti (Office of Licensing) - 40 years • John Lamb (Child Care Scholarship) – 30 years • TJ Bennett (Office of the Assistant State Superintendent) - 20 years <p>Dr. Williamson said she received her letter last year for 45 years of service. She added that she started teaching when she was ten.</p> <p>Dr. Williamson also acknowledged Dr. Salmon. She explained that somehow, no matter where she goes, Dr. Salmon brings up early childhood and explains how critical it is that we do all we can for children, beginning at birth.</p> <p>Dr. Williamson said she had the opportunity to attend one of the Town Hall meetings and took many notes. She said many of the suggestions were things that would have to happen through policy.</p> <p>Steven applied for a grant through the National Governor's Grant Award for \$25,000. It's a lead-in to another larger grant that may be available.</p> <p>We have been reaching out for funding for different initiatives to support early childhood.</p>		

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<p>Pritzker Grant Update – Margaret Williams – Maryland Family Network</p>	<p>Maryland was awarded a \$100,000 planning grant from the Pritzker Foundation for children aged prenatal to age 3. Maryland Family Network applied for the grant.</p> <p>Margaret said her purpose today was to give everyone an overview of what we need to do next.</p> <p>The goal is to expand high-quality services nationally to at least 1 million low-income families with children prenatal to 36 months by 2023. The focus is on policy changes and investments.</p> <p>There are three deliverables in the planning grant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The coalition of partners (which includes everyone on the ECAC and volunteers) • A detailed policy agenda • A Strategic Action Plan that puts activities into practice <p>Following the submission of the planning grant, Maryland can be eligible for a \$1-3 million implementation grant.</p> <p>The planning grant is due January 15, 2020.</p> <p>There will be 3-5 action grants. There were 11 states that applied for the planning grant. The amount of the grant is based on the number of children in the targeted age ranges within the state.</p> <p>We are trying to reach a 25% point increase over the current baseline (additional 17,750 children). The long term goal is a 50% point increase over baseline.</p> <p>The group must define 'high quality'. They provided the following in the application: High quality means comprehensive services based on the family support principles which starts with building on strengths. Parents are their children's first teachers and know their children better than anyone.</p> <p>There will be three workgroups to address different aspects of the grant. Programs/Services, Finance, and Governance/Accountability. She said there will be "a ton of meetings".</p>		

	<p>If anyone is interested in participating on any of the workgroups, email Margaret or Steven. She anticipates people will need to meet at least once every two weeks for about 2-3 hours. There is a lot of work to accomplish in a very short time.</p> <p>Margaret stressed that we need to increase the cultural and geographic diversity of the team working on the project. She also said she would like to see law enforcement, the business community, parents, etc. on the team.</p> <p>Please refer to the PowerPoint distributed during the meeting for additional details.</p>		
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<p>Preschool Development Grant update</p> <p>Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils Quality Grants – Wendy Dantzer</p>	<p>The local ECAC's have the opportunity to apply for a grant of up to \$25,000. The application must be based on a current needs assessment done in their jurisdiction and that addresses the highest need in their community. Each application should be different and can address a wide array of topics, including: poverty, opioids, trauma, professional development focused more on parents, etc.</p> <p>The application is posted online. The grant award period is 7/1/19 through 12/31/19.</p> <p>Annie E. Casey has agreed to conduct more 'Results Count' institutes for the local ECAC's. Annie E. Casey will cover the associated costs as part of an in-kind donation. There will be three cohorts and each session will be two days. This training will be a little more in-depth than the mandatory training required by Race to the Top.</p> <p>Cohort 1 – Western MD, 10/8-9 Cohort 2 – Central MD, 10/10-11 Cohort 3 – Eastern Shore, 10/15-16</p> <p>All sessions are scheduled from 8:00-4:30. 3-4 people from each local council should attend.</p>		
<p>WIDA, MD as an Early Learning WIDA State – Karina Hudack</p>	<p>Karina said this particular topic is one of her passions. As an English language learner (ELL) herself, she knows that once you are an ELL, you are always an ELL.</p> <p>Maryland is a member-state of the WIDA Consortium. The WIDA Consortium is made up of 40 U.S. states, territories and federal agencies dedicated to the research, design and implementation of a high-quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate system to support English language Learners in K-12 contexts. This comprehensive system, based on research and educator feedback, is built on standards,</p>		

	<p>assessments and professional learning. The program is hosted at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, in the Wisconsin Center for Education Research.</p> <p>In Maryland, only 22% of dual language learners who take the KRA demonstrate readiness.</p> <p>Maryland, as part of the Preschool Development Grant, Birth through 5 initiative, has signed a partnership agreement with WIDA - Early Years. WIDA Early Years is a developmentally sound framework for supporting and instructing multilingual children from ages 2.5-5.5 years in early care settings.</p> <p>Maryland is joining five other states (Minnesota, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, and Connecticut) to develop a systematic approach. They will align our Early Learning Standards with the WIDA ELL program standards.</p> <p>Maryland wants to ensure that our state approved/accredited trainers have capacity to provide the training.</p> <p>We are looking to recruit five centers to participate in a Parent Research Project.</p> <p>More information is available on the website:</p> <p>http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/English-Learners/English-Language-Development-Standards.aspx</p>		
<p>Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) – Lucy Amos, CACFP Training Specialist</p>	<p>One in six families in Maryland cannot afford enough food for their families.</p> <p>The CACFP program feeds 4.2 million children receive nutritious meals and snacks every day, with an additional 130,000 adults receiving healthy food as well.</p> <p>The goal of the CACFP is to ensure child care centers and family child care homes have enough money to provide nutritious food/snacks to the children. Providers can receive funding for up to two meals and one snack every day.</p> <p>Children in child care centers are reimbursed at rates based on a child's eligibility for free reduced-price, or paid meals. Family child care home providers in low-income areas, or who meet the low-income eligibility requirements themselves, receive higher levels of reimbursement.</p>		

	<p>The United States Department of Agriculture provides the funding for the program, which is administered by MSDE in Maryland.</p> <p>Lucy shared a video with the group that included Maryland child care providers explaining how the CACFP has impacted their programs, and the children in them.</p> <p>The CACFP provided \$39,228,077 in reimbursements to child care providers last year.</p> <p>A 'Wellness Survey' is going out soon. Providers will receive Professional Activity Units (PAUs) for completing the survey.</p> <p>For more information, contact the Office of School and Community Nutrition Program at 410-767-0199.</p>		
<p>Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant – Vanessa Williams, Curriculum, Instructional Improvement, and Professional Learning, MSDE</p>	<p>All 24 local jurisdictions received sub-grants from the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant. The main priority of the grant is to align language and literacy from birth to age 5 with K-12.</p> <p>Maryland's Comprehensive Literacy Plan is based upon five KEYS across all age groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational leadership • Strategic Professional Learning • Continuity of Standards-based information • Comprehensive system of assessments • Tiered instruction and intervention <p>Maryland is going to apply for the next round of the grant, which will provide up to 3-5 years of funding.</p> <p>During the next round of grants, the school systems will be looking at what they are doing now, and how they can be more collaborative with community partners.</p>		
<p>Office of Child Care Update – Jenn Nizer</p>	<p>Manic Monday – Office of Child Care staff participated in WJZ's Manic Monday this week.</p> <p>Impact Project – They have done an assessment of our existing Quality Rating Improvement System – Maryland EXCELS. We will be asking for input as the process continues.</p> <p>The child care licensing regulations were approved by the State Board on April 23 and will go back out for public comment soon.</p>		

	<p>864 child care providers participated in the MD State Child Care Association conference in Ocean City.</p> <p>Johns Hopkins University/IDEALS has planned an October/November pilot phase of the re-worked Health and Safety Training. The go-live implementation is scheduled for late December/early January. The training will be web-based, more interactive, and will continue to be free for providers.</p>		
Maryland EXCELS Update – Jena Smith	<p>Jena reported on data from April 2019. We have 4,640 participants in Maryland EXCELS. This is an increase of 148 providers from April 2018.</p> <p>56% of all eligible child care programs are participating in Maryland EXCELS.</p> <p>The number of programs participating at levels 3 and 5 have increased. This means there is an increase in the number of accredited programs participating in Maryland EXCELS and providing quality care.</p> <p>Maryland EXCELS has been able to offer bonuses again. Starting October 2018 through September 30, 2019, programs are eligible for bonuses for publishing a rating for the first time, publishing up, or republishing their level 5 ratings. Bonuses are ranging from \$50 to \$4,500 depending on program type, capacity and EXCELS levels.</p> <p>Community Outreach – Maryland EXCELS is on the radio, at minor league baseball games, and other community events. The billboard on the way back from Ocean City will be going back up.</p> <p>Jana thanked Chris Peusch for donating four free registrations for the MD State Child Care Association conference as an incentive for providers who participate in Maryland EXCELS. Maryland EXCELS is always looking for incentives to offer programs.</p>		
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State ECAC Announcements – Patty Stine, Pure Play Every Day	<p>Pure Play Every Day attended the US. Play Coalition Conference where they presented their definition of 'play'. There is not a unified definition of play. Audience members were asked to provide their own definition of 'play' to the poster at the back of the room.</p> <p>Pure Play Every Day is going to roll-up all of the definitions into a White Paper that they will present at the 2020 Conference being held at Clemson University.</p>		

	A survey is available on their website: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CW5XJXG		
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2019 Meeting Dates	<p>August 14 – MSDE</p> <p>November 13 – Location TBD</p> <p>(All dates are on the 2nd Wednesday of that month).</p>	August 14 meeting location is subject to change.	