

House Bill 516

Workgroup to Study the Implementation of Universal Access to Prekindergarten for 4-Year-Olds

Meeting Notes: June 29, 2017

Nancy S. Grasmick State Education Building
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201

Purpose: House Bill 516 “Workgroup to Study the Implementation of Universal Access to Prekindergarten for 4-Year-Olds,” was passed by both chambers and enacted under Article II, Section 17(b) of the Maryland Constitution – Chapter 25. The workgroup will “study and make recommendations regarding certain matters; requiring the Workgroup to report its findings and recommendations to a certain Commission) on Innovation and Excellence in Education) on or before September 1, 2017.”

Meeting Outcomes:

Build whole group consensus on governance and funding

Meeting Notes:

Members in attendance: Elizabeth Kelley (Chair), Honorable Eric Ebersole, Michele Dean, Elise Burgess, Stacey Henson, Kelly Hall, Simeon Russell, Christina Peusch, Jackie Grant, Clinton McSherry, Rachel London, Esq., Flora Gee, Sharon Vance, Toby Harkleroad, Honorable William Ferguson, Tracy Jost, Steven Hicks, Crystal Barksdale, Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary

Members not in attendance: Becky Yackley, Shari Sierra, Ginny Simoneau, Karen Karten,

Welcome and Introductions by Workgroup Chair

Elizabeth Kelley, Acting Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Early Childhood Development, welcomed the workgroup. The Workgroup members introduced themselves. Ms. Kelley invited Senator Ferguson and Delegate Atterbeary to share their expectations for the workgroup’s recommendations. Both hoped that the group would reach consensus on the recommendations and be able to help provide valuable plans to the Kirwan Commission.

Review Notes

Meeting notes were accepted with no changes.

Build Whole Group Consensus on Governance and Funding

Senator Ferguson stated that the per child cost for PreK will come through the Kirwan’s Commission’s funding formula. Under this scenario, the funding will go directly from the State to each LEA. Each LEA would need to plan for PreK in their Master Plan which is submitted to MSDE for review. Senator Ferguson recommended that a certain percentage of funding could be set aside for community based PreK programs. LEAs can grant funds to community-based programs through MOUs. Senator Ferguson also

stressed the importance of a phased roll out (targeted expansion vs. universal roll-out) and the discussions on capacity building will build more contexts around roll-out considerations.

One member expressed concern about the timing of funding distribution through the LEA's process, which could prolong the time it takes for community-based programs to receive funds.

Delegate Eberesole acknowledged that some LEAs may establish better partnerships than others, and that the recommendations could provide a structure to outline how LEAs work with community based programs.

Rachel Hise reiterated that expanding PreK and building a robust early childhood system is a top priority of the Kirwan Commission. She also provided that legislation can be proposed to give MSDE authority to remediate funding problems between community-based programs and LEAs. It could follow the Charter School model where the LEA has an MOU with the school.

Some members of the Workgroup suggested that MSDE's involvement in the larger governance structure would ensure equity among LEAs and community-based programs regarding funding distribution. The Workgroup agreed the MOU can be used to define roles and responsibilities agreed. The group also agreed the MOU structure should be very specific and MSDE should provide guidance on what is included in the MOU. It was also suggested that MSDE include samples of current MOUs in the final report for the Commission.

One member proposed that community based programs must reach EXCELS level 4 or 5 in order to participate in PreK programs in order to ensure high quality programs. It was discussed that the roll-out of PreK over time is important so that programs have time to move up the levels in EXCELS and to recruit qualified early childhood teachers with MSDE teacher certification. It was also stated that teachers in community-based PreK programs must be paid salaries commensurate with the salaries of PreK teachers in the LEA for each respective jurisdiction.

Renee Spence, of the Superintendent's Association of Maryland, provided updates from the organization. She provided that Superintendents' are on board to expand PreK; and asks that the Workgroup consider diverse roll-out taking into account the size of the school systems.

One member shared that the Montgomery County Council is interested in funding coming to the Council so that they can coordinate the funding as part of child care. Other members stated that PreK is an educational program and should not be considered child care.

It was also shared that the Kirwan Commission funding formula will provide maintenance of effort funds for the LEA so that they can hire staff to manage the PreK program.

Adjournment

Ms. Kelley thanked participants for attending and announced that the workgroup will meet again this month on July 10, 2017, at new time- 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, MSDE, 8th floor, room 6.