

House Bill 516

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

Meeting Notes: May 12, 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:

Review workgroup purpose and statement of work

Review and discuss the report, “A Comprehensive Analysis of Prekindergarten in Maryland – January 2016 (Adequacy Study) by Augenblick, Palaich and Associates

Collect feedback regarding issues and questions to consider.

Meeting Notes:

Members in attendance: Elizabeth Kelley (Chair), Honorable Eric Ebersole, Michele Dean, Elise Burgess, Karen Karten, Stacey Henson, Shari Sierra, Kelly Hall, Becky Yackley, Simeon Russell, Christina Peusch, Crystal Barksdale, Jackie Grant, Clinton McSherry, Rachel London, Esq., Steven Hicks, Tracy Jost, Ginny Simoneau, Flora Gee, Sharon Vance, Toby Harkleroad

Members not in attendance: Honorable William Ferguson, Maryland PTA, Parent’s Place

Welcome and Introductions by Workgroup Chair

Elizabeth Kelley, Acting Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Early Childhood Development, welcomed the workgroup and explained the ground rules for members and observers. The Workgroup members and observers introduced themselves. Ms. Kelley provided a brief overview of the purpose of the workgroup.

Workgroup Purpose and Statement of Work

Rachel Hise, Principal Policy Analyst at the Maryland Department of Legislative Services, provided background information and described the workgroup purpose and statement of work in detail. She stated that the work of this group can help to make recommendations that will inform the work of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. The Commission has discussed an additional grant to LEAs that are providing full day PreK as an incentive to encourage LEAs to implement full day PreK. One idea is to fold PreK funding into the larger funding formula with a per child cost for full day needed to drop into the formula.

Presentation of “A Comprehensive Analysis of Prekindergarten in Maryland – January 2016” report
Simon Workman, Associate Director, Early Childhood Policy at the Center for American Progress, provided background information on how the Adequacy Study was developed, the data used, and assumptions made to support the current costs in the study. He stated that data from the report would be updated with current data to include capacity data and return on investment analysis. Mr. Workman presented two funding models from the report: (1) State/local share in which all funds would be distributed through the LEA’s and (2) State/local/family share which would involve a sliding fee scale, income verification, and collection of parent fees (see page 5 of the PowerPoint presentation). Other considerations include the following: increasing the number of Pre-K slots as well as improving quality; deciding the threshold for universal access in Maryland (the threshold used in the adequacy study is 80%); determining the capacity needed to reach universal access; and what supports are needed to improve the quality of existing slots to reach capacity.

Issues/Questions Raised by the Workgroup

1. Current ratio of full day to half day Pre-k
2. Capacity counts should include children with disabilities
3. Opportunities for providers to improve quality (EXCELS 4 and 5)
4. Readiness for certified teachers
5. Networking model to address capacity (including family child care)
-Note: Mr. Workman will provide the Seattle model for including family child care
6. The need for multiple models to consider
7. The cost of tuition in community-based programs
8. Cost of tuition varies by locale
-Note: The Commission will consider the Geographic Cost of Education Index and adjustments may be made to the base cost per child based on location. This workgroup will provide information on cost to the Commission.
9. Consider the State’s current infrastructure to determine subsidy and co-pays
10. Communication with School Finance Officers to discuss how parent fees may be collected
11. What additional data is needed and where can that data be found

Key Areas Addressed by the Workgroup

Judith Walker, Branch Chief, Early Learning Branch, Division of Early Childhood Development, instructed the workgroup to separate into smaller groups to discuss key considerations, concerns, and questions that the workgroup should address, and categorize those comments on posters around the room for later discussion. See separate handout for these concerns.

Closing Comments

The Honorable Eric Ebersole, House of Delegates Member, District 12, made closing comments and noted that the Commission will address a broad view of the data and recommendations.

Adjournment

Elizabeth Kelley thanked participants for attending and announced that the workgroup would not meet again this month to allow participants adequate time to gather data from their respective jurisdictions, and the workgroup would reconvene in June.

Next meeting: June 8, 2017, 9:00 am to 11:00 am, MSDE, 8th floor, room 6.