



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

October 5, 2018

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex M. Azar II
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretaries Azar and DeVos:


I am pleased to designate the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) as the entity that will have responsibility for execution of the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five grant if our state is awarded the opportunity. The Division of Early Childhood and the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services are co-located at the agency making the MSDE the most appropriate and best suited entity to easily and successfully oversee and manage the grant, as well as facilitate collaboration, coordination, and alignment among the full range of early childhood care and education programs, services, and funding streams in Maryland's birth through age five mixed delivery system. The MSDE is best suited to lead the state in improving early childhood program quality and improving the transitions between diverse early childhood programs and from such programs into elementary school.

I am confident that the MSDE has the fiscal, administrative, and performance management expertise and capacity to effectively administer this funding opportunity as it did previously with its Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant and continues to do with the original Preschool Development Grants, as well as funds provided through the Child Care Development Block Grant, Every Students Succeeds Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Because the MSDE oversees the 24 Local Education Agencies and the majority of early childhood programs, including child care, Head Start collaboration, State PreK, State-funded home visiting, and special education services for infants and toddlers and their families and preschool-age children, the agency is well-positioned to increase program operating and cost efficiencies, expand parental choices and involvement, and ensure families are linked to the full range of diverse services they need.

In Maryland, the MSDE serves as a convener of diverse state and local stakeholders through its leadership of the State Early Childhood Advisory Council, Office of Child Care Advisory Council, and Family Engagement Coalition, as well as locally through the 54 Judy Center Partnerships and the 24 local jurisdiction's early learning coordinators. Through these partnerships, MSDE works to improve the availability and quality of programs and supports for all Maryland's children and families, but especially for the most vulnerable.

Led by the MSDE, this new funding stream would enable Maryland to build upon and leverage existing Federal, State, local, and non-governmental resources to align and strengthen the delivery of existing programs so that each child can reach her or his full potential.

Sincerely,



Larry Hogan
Governor



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October 05, 2018

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex M. Azar II
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos
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400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretaries Azar and DeVos:

The Maryland Head Start Association, Inc. (MHSA) works to strengthen the Head Start community in the State by providing advocacy for vulnerable children and families, leadership, and professional development. We are active members of both the State Early Childhood Advisory Council and Office of Child Care Advisory Council. As key stakeholders, we encourage you to fully fund Maryland's application for the Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five program.

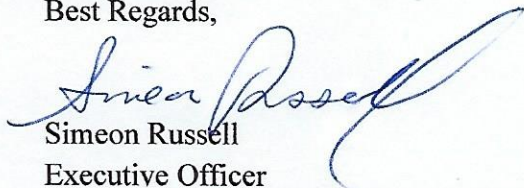
The Maryland Head Start State Collaboration Office is located in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The MHSA works closely with the MSDE Division of Early Childhood to ensure our most vulnerable children have access to high-quality early learning and families receive the supports they need. To that end, the MHSA has partnered with MSDE to increase Head Start participation in the State's Quality Rating and Improvement System, MD EXCELS. Today, over 130 Head Start programs serve as EXCELS providers, and forty of these programs have earned the highest level of quality. The MSDE has included four Head Start providers in Maryland's mixed-delivery, Federally-funded Preschool Development Grant program.

The Division's Head Start Collaboration Director and senior staff have been true partners to our organization, participating in our Directors meetings, attending our conferences, and contributing to the development of our strategic plan. The MSDE has held local education agencies accountable by requiring them to submit agreements between the school systems and Head Start programs with their Title I plans to better coordinate seamless transitions for children and families. The Division also works closely with the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grantees, providing grants for these grantees to eliminate the time lag burden for provider reimbursement. In addition, the MSDE provides additional funds to improve the quality of the Partnerships.

Maryland has made tremendous progress over the years in developing and improving its early care and education system and including MHSA as a key partner. This new funding opportunity would enable Maryland to conduct a thorough needs assessment, update its strategic plan, maximize parental choice and knowledge, share best practices among Head Start and other providers, and improve the quality of early childhood programs.

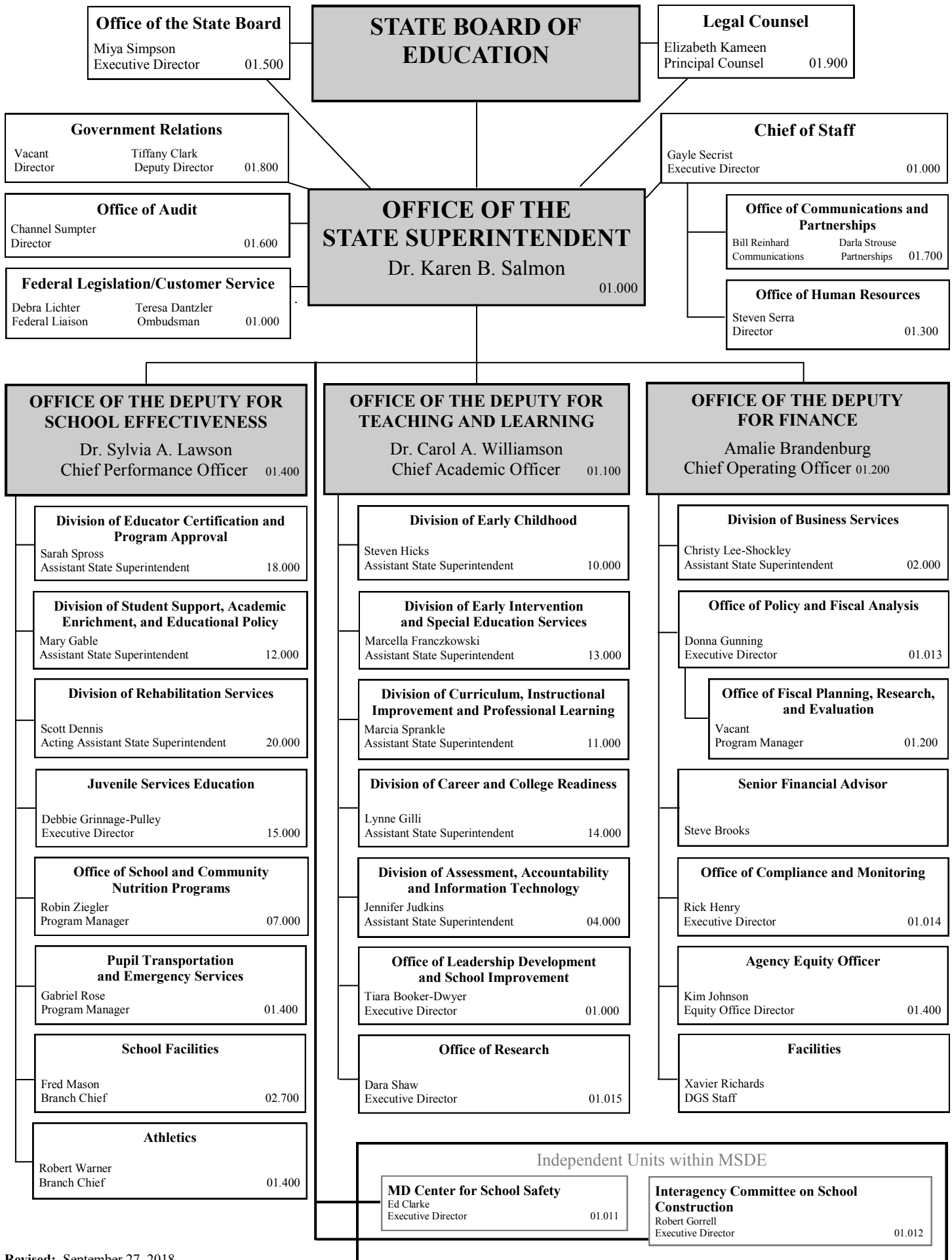
Thank you for considering Maryland's application.

Best Regards,

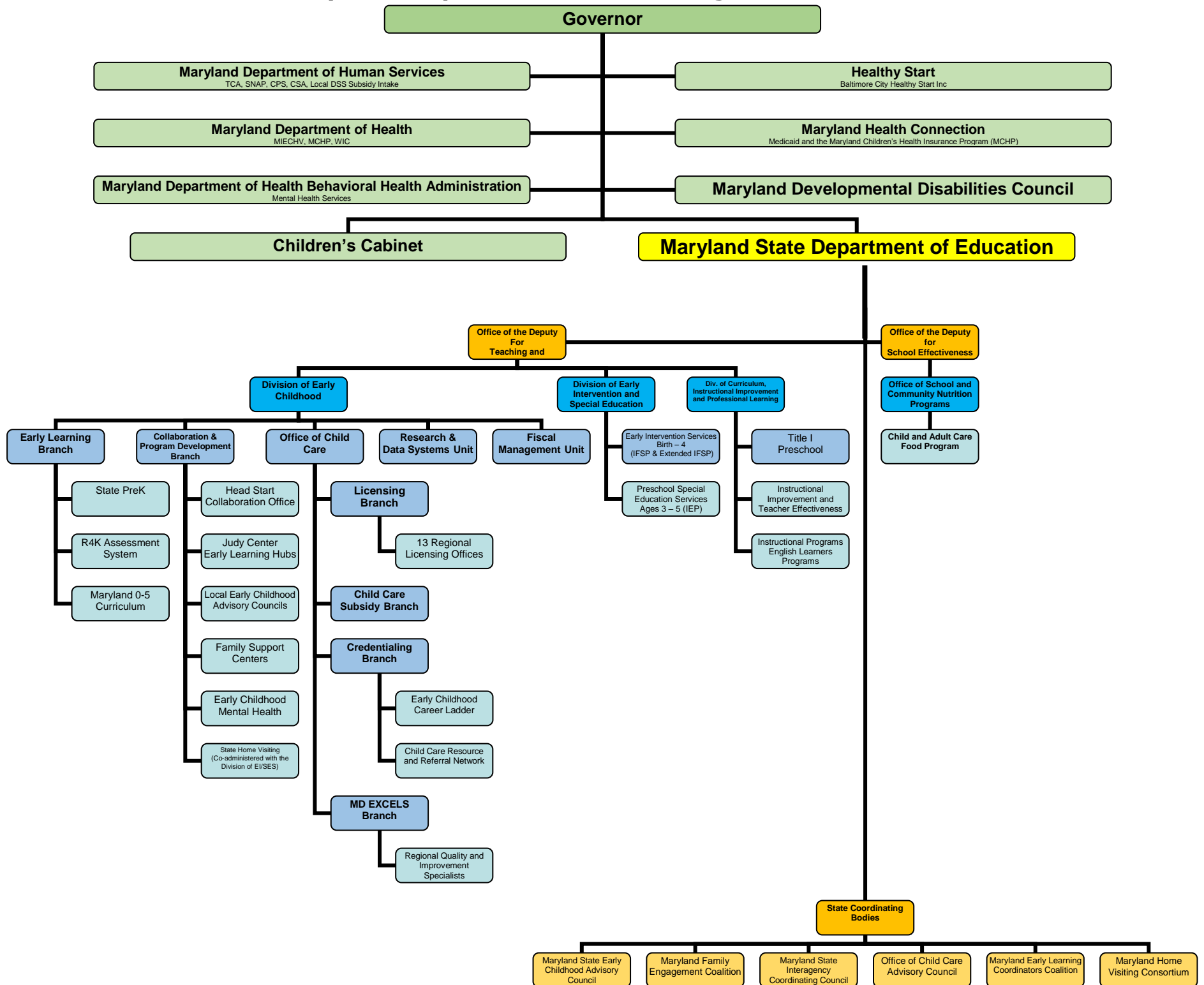


Simeon Russell
Executive Officer
Maryland Head Start Association, Inc.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Maryland Early Childhood Services Organizational Chart



Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

October 16, 2018

Secretary Alex M. Azar
Department of Health and Human Services
330 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Secretary Azar:

We are pleased to support the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) application for the Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five program. As a convener of state and local entities working to improve the availability and quality of early childhood care and education programs in Maryland, the MSDE is positioned to conduct a statewide, comprehensive birth through five needs assessment.

Maryland has been forward thinking in centralizing the majority of its early childhood programs in a mixed delivery system at the MSDE, where the Division of Early Childhood and the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services coordinate and collaborate on a full range of care and education programs, services, and funding streams. These include Child Care, Head Start collaboration, State Pre-K, Title I preschool, State-funded home visiting, and special education services for infants and toddlers and their families and preschool-age children.

The MSDE stands out among state education departments nation-wide for its focus on "equity and excellence" and ensuring the seamless transition of children between early childhood programs and from such programs to elementary school, especially for low-income and disadvantaged children. This new funding opportunity would allow Maryland to build on and leverage the successes from local, state and federal investments.

We encourage you to give the State of Maryland's application for a Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five grant favorable consideration.

Sincerely,



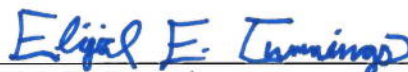
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



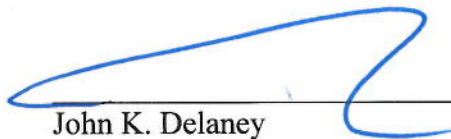
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Anthony Brown
United States Representative



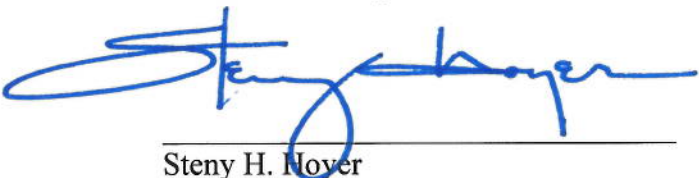
Elijah E. Cummings
United States Representative



John K. Delaney
United States Representative



Andy Harris, M.D.
United States Representative



Steny H. Hoyer
United States Representative



Jamie Raskin
United States Representative



C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
United States Representative



John P. Sarbanes
United States Representative

cc: Secretary Betsy DeVos, United States Department of Education

Appendix A: Recent Maryland Needs Assessments and Strategic Plans

NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESOURCES	DESCRIPTION
Evaluation of the Efficacy of Maryland's Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge Grant	Report on the effectiveness of implementation of the Maryland's RTT-ELC Grant, conducted by the Center for Early Childhood Education & Intervention (CECEI) of University of Maryland.
Affordable Care Act Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program: Maryland's Statewide Needs Assessment	Needs Assessment in preparation for the Affordable Care Act Home Visiting Initiative. Covers 15 indicators including: infant mortality, premature birth, unemployment, poverty, crime rates, and more.
Child Care for Children with Special Needs	Report on the findings of the 2016 Survey of Child Care Providers relating to the availability and quality of childcare for children with special needs, by Maryland Family Network.
Project Abstracts: Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils Implementation Grant	Compilation of abstracts for the Local Early Childhood Advisory Council Implementation Grant (January 1 st , 2013- June 30 th , 2015) from counties in Maryland.
Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education	Preliminary recommendations with a fiscal impact to support Maryland policies in expanding of high-quality Pre-K to four year olds and three year olds from low-income families, Judy centers.
Maryland Report on Part B Indicator 8 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2017-2018	Report on Part B Indicator 8 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by administering surveys for preschool and school age, conducted by ICF International.
Maryland Head Start State Collaboration Office Needs Assessment Report of 201	Needs assessment study for the Maryland Head Start programs and Head Start Collaboration grants by the Maryland Head Start Collaboration Office.
Head Start Programs in Maryland: 2018 Program Information & Needs Assessment Report for the State of Maryland	Program Information and Needs Assessment report for the Head Start programs in Maryland by Maryland Head Start Association.
STRATEGIC PLANNING RESOURCES	DESCRIPTION
Maryland Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Application for Initial Funding	Maryland's Application for initial funding for RTT-ELC.
Maryland Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan	Maryland ESSA consolidated State Plan, revised In May 23, 2018.
Achieving School Readiness: A 5-Year Action Agenda for Maryland	5-year action agenda to promote and achieve school readiness for Maryland children, by the Leadership in Action Program.
Strategic Plan: Moving Maryland Forward – <i>Sharpen the Focus for 2020</i>	Strategic Plan for the Division of Special Education/ Early Intervention Services, by Maryland State Department of Education
Strategic Plan of the Division of Early Childhood Development 2010-2012	Strategic Plan of the Division of Early Childhood Development, by Maryland State Department of Education. (2010-2012)
Maryland Commission on Innovation & Excellence in Education: Preliminary Report January 2018	Report that provides reviews and recommendations for ECE funding formula and policy recommendations for Maryland's PreK-12 system, by the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education.
Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant Overview 2012-2015	Presentation on the overview of the RTT-ELC Grant.
Report on Developing a Master Plan on Professional Development for Teachers and Providers of Early Childhood Education	Report on Developing a master plan on professional development for teachers and providers of ECE, conducted by the Maryland State Department of Education in 2015.
Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for Maryland FFY 2019-2021	CCDF plan for Maryland, FFY 2019-2021, led by Maryland State Department of Education.
Maryland - Application of Grants Under the Preschool Development Grants – Expansion	Maryland Application for Grants under the Preschool Development Grants – Expansion, in 2014.