

**Maryland State Department of Education
Task Force on Universal Preschool Education
Meeting Summary
December 7, 2006**

Task Force members in attendance:

Rolf Grafwallner (Maryland State Department of Education), Sandy Skolnik via speaker phone (Maryland Committee for Children), Veronica Land Davis (Maryland Head Start Association), Elisa L. Klein (University of Maryland, College of Education), Patricia Gordon (Maryland Association of Boards of Education), Mark Rosenberg (Maryland State Child Care Association), Garland Thomas (attending for Tracie Farrell - Governor's Office for Children), Arlene Ennis (Family Child Care), T. Sky Woodward (parent of child in preschool), Gene Counihan (Maryland Chamber of Commerce), Mary Hunt (College of Southern Maryland), Debra Metheny (Board of Education of Allegany County), Janine Bacquie (Montgomery County Public Schools)

Staff in attendance:

Michael Cockey (MSDE), Janet Moye Cornick (Maryland Higher Education Commission), Heather See (University System of Maryland)

Welcome and Introductions:

Rolf Grafwallner, Co-Chairperson for the Task Force, welcomed the members and guests. Task Force members introduced themselves to the group. Dr. Grafwallner mentioned that Sandy Skolnik could not attend the meeting due to surgery recovery, but would be participating via speaker phone. He asked if there were any changes to minutes from the last meeting. No changes were mentioned. He reviewed the information in the folders distributed to the Task Force members. Included in the folders was the handout on purposes and goals of the Task Force from the last meeting, which had been updated to reflect the current actions in place.

Dr. Grafwallner turned the floor over to the panel of expert speakers who were invited to address issues relating to the current preschool movement in the States, the characteristics of existing model programs in the States of Georgia and New York and the city of Chicago, and research on the economic benefits of preschool education.

Panel Presentations:

Dr. Sara Watson
Senior Officer-State Policy Initiatives
The Pew Charitable Trusts
Advancing Quality Pre-K in All States

Dr. Watson discussed the Trusts' initiative of encouraging quality early learning opportunities for all three- and four-year-olds in the United States. She explained that 31 states had increased funding for prekindergarten in 2006 with a total invested amount of

\$450 million. This year no state decreased funding. Prekindergarten education is a bipartisan issue with both Democrats and Republicans equally supporting the movement.

The goal is to provide prekindergarten to all children; therefore, it is strongly recommended that prekindergarten programs not be targeted programs for low-income children. The need for prekindergarten does not end at the poverty line. Middle class families typically cannot afford high quality private preschool programs yet do not qualify for federally funded programs like Head Start, thus their children often lack the support they need. Having prekindergarten for all children will provide the extra boost they need before kindergarten. In 2002, **Florida** passed ballot initiative to provide prekindergarten to all children, which would not have been passed if it was only for a target group of children.

In **Illinois**, there was a \$30 million increase in funding this past year. Governor Blagojevich made prekindergarten one of his top priorities and wants to provide a universal program for three and four-year-olds. This program also has a health care component for children. **Tennessee** expanded prekindergarten by extending it to military families. This was very well received by Tennessee residents. Even **Louisiana**, which had little extra funding after Hurricane Katrina, increased funding by \$1.5 million.

Currently, 38 states have state funded prekindergarten programs. Only three states—**Georgia, Oklahoma, and Florida**—have a commitment to serve all four-year-olds. As a goal, **Illinois, New York, Tennessee and West Virginia** aim to serve all four-year-olds. Six states out west—**Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Idaho, and Utah**—have no state prekindergarten funding. This region of the country is now a main focus of the Pew initiative.

According to data from National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER), Pre-K Now, and MSDE, **Maryland** ranks 6 out of 38 for prekindergarten access for four-year-olds (31% enrolled) and 20 out of 38 for three-year-olds (1% enrolled). In 2006, funding for the state prekindergarten program was increased by 12.1%. The total cost per child for a ½ day pre-k was \$4830.

The Trusts' initiative focuses on access *and* quality. Quality is a big issue in prekindergarten education. Children will not get the education and care they need if the program is of poor quality. For example, **Florida** recently initiated a prekindergarten for all program but lacks high quality standards, whereas **Tennessee** has a small program (has increased this year 57%) but a 10 out of 10 on the NIEER quality checklist. Accordingly, instead of starting off with a universal program, it may be better to start with a smaller program of high quality and expand from there. Quality standards set forth by NIEER include elements such as staff ratios, class size, teacher certification and professional development, comprehensive early learning standards, and vision and hearing assessments.

It is recommended that teachers have a Bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education or a related field and teaching certification. Research shows that a BA makes a difference; teachers are more caring and interact more positively with children.

Dr. Watson emphasized that prekindergarten should be fun for children but educational as well. Social-emotional skills are essential to learn academic skills, thus programs should not be academic only. Prekindergarten for all does not mean that are services must be the same for all children. There should be a core program for all plus more support services for at-risk children. Wrap around services provide the care for children of working parents before and after the core prekindergarten program. Programs should be delivered in diverse settings, not just in public schools, so parents have a choice as to where to enroll their children. Yet, quality standards should be the same regardless of setting (school, child care center, family day care). Children need other supports in addition to education and care, such as health and nutritional services, as evidenced by Illinois. Support for parents is also an important program component.

The term “pre-k for all” has received higher approval rates in focus groups than has the term “universal pre-k” which tends to sound more mandatory. The Trusts use *pre-k* over *preschool* since “*pre-k* is more readily associated with the K-12 system and is clearly defined as a significant year or two of learning that provides three- and four-year-old children with the skills necessary to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. *Preschool* is a more general term used to refer to a variety of early care and education programs including prekindergarten, childcare, nursery school, and even ‘mothers-day-out’ programs which serve children of various ages on numerous possible schedules” (<http://www.preknow.org/resource/abc/prekvspschool.cfm>).

The Pew Charitable Trusts’ grantee, Pre-K Now, offers states technical assistance and financial support, helps in engaging key constituencies, a peer network of state leaders, and research on state prekindergarten programs. NIEER has collected data on state funding, access to prekindergarten and program quality. NIEER and Pre-K Now have great resources from rigorous longitudinal studies to help advise states in their efforts.

The Trusts support other national grantee partners, such as Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, which targets delinquency and violence prevention by advocating for prekindergarten for all, and the Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media, which provides information/story ideas and workshops to education journalists on how to write a good report on the prekindergarten movement.

Dr. Clive Belfield
Associate Professor of Economics
City University of New York
Economic Benefits of Early Childhood Education

In Dr. Belfield’s presentation, he examined the economic benefits of early childhood education from the taxpayers’ perspective. He explained that he was not presenting on how the State of Maryland should pay for prekindergarten but why we should invest in early education. Expanding high quality early childhood education would likely reduce

government expenditures and save taxpayers' money. The remedies are too expensive. Benefits of preschool include gains in cognitive ability, high school graduation rates, and child health and welfare, and lower rates of special education, grade retention, teenage parenting, and crime. These outcomes result in fiscal benefits in the school system, the criminal justice system, and health and welfare services, as well as increased tax payments as a result of higher earnings.

Three out of 10 adults in the US are not high school graduates. National data show that high school dropouts make substantially less money than high school graduates, and thus, pay much less in taxes.

Maryland has special education placement rate of 13.1%, below the national average; however, this rate has grown by 29% over the last decade. The cost per child in special education is 1.9 times that in regular classrooms. Federal contribution is less than \$1500 per child in special education, making it the state's responsibility.

High school dropouts are less than 20% of the population, but include 37% of federal prison inmates, 54% of state prison inmates, 38% of local jail inmates, and 33% of probationers. High school graduation attainment is strongly negatively correlated with criminal activity, further supporting educational initiatives. The cost of one year of incarceration is approx \$35,000, more than the average salary of a prekindergarten teacher.

Dr. Belfield explained that we must look at early education as an investment and decide how much the state can afford to pay rather than focus on how much it will cost. Using an equation, we can calculate causal present value savings to the taxpayers in terms of: $T =$ Tax revenues; $S =$ School system savings; $W =$ Health and welfare savings; $J =$ Criminal justice system savings; and compare the cost of a high quality preschool program ($C =$ cost budgeted to first grade) to the total savings ($B = T + S + W + J$).

We must be conservative as costs rise over time and higher SES students tend to benefit less than lower SES children. According to cost-benefit analyses from other states (Arkansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Ohio, and California), the cost-benefit ratios range from 1.5 to 2.5. The higher ratios occur in situations where prekindergarten enrollment is relatively low and government spending is relatively high. It is very difficult to identify ratios less than 1, indicating that there is almost always an equal or greater return on the investment. Additionally, it is hard to find ratios better than this in other programs (such as higher education).

The RAND Corporation did a cost-benefit analysis of the preschool program in California and reported the breakdown of impacts of preschool by income level. Participation had positive impacts on all children. Georgetown did a cost-benefit analysis of Oklahoma and found benefits for all groups, both FARMS (children who qualify for free and reduced meals) and non-FARMS.

Maryland is right in the middle as far as the cost-benefit ratio when accounting for the state's rankings: prekindergarten access for three-year-olds (ranked 20th), prekindergarten access for four-year-olds (6th), resources (38th), and rates of special education placement (30th), arrests (28th), high school dropout (25th), and teacher salary (12th). Dr. Belfield concluded by stating that the current funding in MD is far short of ensuring quality sufficient enough to have positive impacts on child outcomes; therefore, it is essential to pay close attention to the amount of funding the program receives and maintain high standards.

Dr. Arthur Reynolds
Professor College of Education and Human Development
University of Minnesota
Impacts of the Child-Parent Center Early Education Program

There is substantial evidence of outcomes from early childhood interventions over the past 50 years, specifically the Perry Preschool Project and the Abecedarian Project. Due to these intervention studies, researchers now understand the mechanisms of the economic effects of prekindergarten. Yet many people questioned whether outcomes produced from small-scale model programs could be replicated by large-scale programs run in public schools.

Dr. Reynolds described the outcomes of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC), the only large-scale, longitudinal, experimental study of an intensive early intervention program. The CPC program began in 1967 and continues today. Chicago was the first city to use Title 1 money for prekindergarten and has since served over 100,000 families living in high poverty. The CPC program has a heavy emphasis on parent involvement and basic skills, such as literacy, numeracy and listening, and includes home visits and field trip activities. The program is run by public schools so centers are located within or near schools. Each center has a parent resource room to provide support to parents. There is a high cost associated with the program due to high teacher salaries and intensity and duration of program.

The study examined what the CPC program offered over and above existing programs in the community. The study's sample included 1,539 children born in 1979 or 1980. Approximately 93% of children were African American, 75% were from single-parent families, and 73% had 4 or more assessed risks. Families lived in the highest poverty areas in Chicago. Child-Parent Centers were put in sites where there were no Head Start programs. Children were randomly assigned to attend the CPC program from 2 to 6 years or to an alternative early education program in kindergarten. Children participated in the half day preschool program and experienced home care during the remaining time. Mothers were involved 90% of time, so there is limited information on father involvement besides mothers' report. Nine hundred eighty-nine children completed the CPC program. The children were followed over time until age 24.

Dr. Reynolds reported that attendance in the CPC program for 18 months—averaging a cost of \$6,692 per child—generated a return of \$47,759 per participant. CPC children had

large gains in cognitive skills by kindergarten and scored at 47% of the national percentile while the comparison group scored at 28%. There was a 50% reduction in special education by age 18 and significantly less rates of reported child maltreatment in the CPC group. CPC children had significantly higher rates of high school completion and four-year college attainment, and a 15-20% improvement in economic well-being. The comparison group was less likely to have health insurance. By age 24, CPC graduates were 33% less likely to be arrested and 25-30% less likely to experience a felony arrest and incarceration. Effects were the strongest for African American males who tend to be most at risk.

The key elements of CPC program effectiveness include:

- longer duration: more is better (up to 6 years in program versus 1 or 2 years in Head Start/preschool)
- high intensity of services (parent involvement and literacy)
- small ratios (8:1; 16 children with one certified teacher plus aide)
- compensatory focus
- highly trained teachers and professional development
- high teacher salaries (paid average of \$55,000)

A limitation to the study is that there were no middle class families to serve as a comparison; therefore, we do not know the extent to effects. Dr. Reynolds concluded by stressing the importance of a family-school partnership. Providing center-based support for parents is essential for academic success and tends to be more successful than home visitation programs, which may promote social isolation.

Dr. Sharon Ramey

Professor of Child and Family Studies

Georgetown University

Early Childhood Education: Evidence to support pre-k investment in high quality, early learning programs

Dr. Ramey discussed how both biology and experience greatly affect learning. When teachers have personal social-emotional relationships with children it results in better outcomes in comparison to more distant teachers.

Dr. Ramey described “Seven Daily Essentials” that children need according to scientific findings (Ramey & Ramey, 1999, *Going to School*):

1. To be encouraged to explore with all senses
2. To be mentored in basic skills (intellectual; social-emotional)
3. To be celebrated for their new skills (reward behavior)
4. To be able to rehearse and extend new skills
5. To be protected from inappropriate disapproval, teasing, and punishment
6. To receive communication that is rich and responsive (language)
7. To have guidance and limitations set on their behavior

Research indicates that children whose mothers engage them in high level of conversation have about 800 words in their vocabulary by 26 months, while children who experience low levels of language engagement have a vocabulary of about 200 words. Children in low resource environments have delays of 1 to 2.5 years at kindergarten entry in overall academic and intellectual competence.

Dr. Ramey shared the history and the outcomes of the Abecedarian (ABC) Project, a longitudinal, high quality, early educational intervention study she and her husband, Dr. Craig Ramey, began in 1971 that still continues today. Very high risk families in Chapel Hill, NC were enrolled in the program. The study tested the impact of a birth to 5 year program compared to a K to 2nd grade program and birth to 2nd program. The study addressed the question of whether or not school achievement and adult success can be significantly improved through an intervention that begins after kindergarten versus during the preschool years.

Participants were randomly assigned to a treatment group (n=53) or control group (n=53). Children in the educational treatment group were provided adequate nutrition, supportive social services, free primary health care, and an intensive preschool program (full day, 5-day/week, 50 weeks/year, 5 years) focused on cognitive, motor, social, and language skills. The program lasted 7 ½ hours/day with some programs 8-10 hours/day. It would have been unethical to give control group participants nothing, so they were provided with adequate nutrition, supportive social services and low-cost or free primary health care. The purpose was to study the value added by the educational component over and above the basic nutritional and medical services.

Results indicated that the control group was a full standard deviation below the national norm on various measurements from birth through age 3 years. At 4 years, less than half performed at the average norm. The greatest impacts in the treatment group occurred with the highest risk children—those in the lowest resource environments. Treated children had significantly higher IQs than control group children with the largest benefits for children with less educated mothers. All treatment children were above the national norm. Grade repetition and special education placement were significantly reduced by 12% and 48%, respectively. When comparing the results for the three different cohorts of children, those participants who experienced the birth to 2nd grade program (preschool plus booster K-2nd program) had the most significantly positive results in 3rd grade reading scores. This finding reveals that intensity *and* duration are important. Additionally, many parents in the CPC program went back to school and were able to work full-time because of highly reliable year-round, full-day services.

Longitudinally, from age 8 to age 21, treated children had significantly higher reading scores than control group children. Prekindergarten education increased the percentage of skilled employment or college enrollment at age 21 and delayed the age of having a first child.

Dr. Ramey mentioned that the Louisiana LA4 program has also shown significant results, specifically, reductions in special education placements and increases in third grade

reading and math scores; the report is due out soon. She pointed out that, according to a recent evaluation, Montgomery County Public Schools' half-day prekindergarten program demonstrated effects that were exactly half those effects of the LA4 full-day program.

Ms. Marsha Moore
Commissioner
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
Bright from the Start

Ms. Moore was invited to discuss *Bright from the Start*, Georgia's universal prekindergarten program housed under the Department of Early Care and Learning. The program presently serves 76,600 children across all counties in Georgia, 55% of all 4-year-olds in the state (no 3-year-olds). This number has continuously grown 2% each year. The program has a budget of \$290 million with a cost per child of \$3,919. It operates on the public school schedule of 6.5 hours/day for 180 days/year. Approximately 43% of children are served in public schools, 56% in private programs, and 1% in other public programs (e.g., military bases).

The program serves children of a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds. About 55% of children are considered at-risk (i.e., receive WIC, FARMS). Parents do not pay anything except for lunch, unless they qualify for FARMS. There are inclusion classrooms as well. Some Head Start programs apply for lottery funding to offer blended programs with both Head Start and lottery funded children, but they must meet both sets of standards. State prekindergarten does not have health services like Head Start; however, there is a strong parent component modeled after the Family Service Worker.

Teacher salaries are dependent on education level. Teachers in public schools get the same base pay as those in the private sector, but they get better benefits and supplemental payments.

Ms. Moore highlighted the top 10 reasons why *Bright from the Start* has worked:

1. Commitment of Georgia's political leaders and policy makers.
2. An ensured dedicated source of funding. State uses lottery funds for universal preschool and higher education.
3. Made it voluntary for parents and providers. Parents choose the setting and the curriculum (multiple types of curriculum approved that meet early learning standards). Private providers can choose to participate; they do not have to have a program, but if they do, they must follow specific quality standards that in some cases are difficult to attain.
4. Universality removes the stigma of being an at-risk program. When programs include all SES groups, it makes the program standards higher.
5. Offered through public/private partnerships which reduces amount of money needed to build and expand facilities. It offers more community buy-in: the state prekindergarten is there to support all existing programs, not to compete. By

- engaging private programs early, the partnerships can help with transition and implementation.
6. Emphasized early childhood education; prekindergarten is not child care. The program clearly links to K-12 content standards to offer seamless educational opportunities.
 7. Provided family support services for at-risk families.
 8. Cultivated meaningful collaborations with other public/private entities in early care and education field in Georgia.
 9. Implemented a uniform, open financial payment and reporting system for all prekindergarten providers. The program operates under guidelines and providers are reimbursed for payments. It is important to build trust and credibility and pay providers on time. Program providers communicate through technology: applications and rosters are entered online; documentation of financial payments is submitted online; new guidelines are emailed to providers. The state has also started a waiting list online.
 10. Set and required high quality standards and supported those standards by providing quality training/professional development for prekindergarten personnel. Program monitors are sent out to observe program implementation and randomly select programs to audit. *Bright from the Start* staff members are available to help private providers purchase developmentally appropriate materials for classrooms and provide support to help programs meet standards. All programs must all meet standards, including licensed or approved-safe facility, credentialed teachers, and an approved curriculum. Those programs that fail to meet standards are given a limited amount of time to improve their facilities or else they lose funding. Contracts are renewed each year.

Ms. Moore emphasized that customer service standards—how we treat providers as business partners—are just as important as other standards (e.g., teaching certifications).

Ms. Cindy Gallagher
New York State
Universal Prekindergarten Program

Ms. Gallagher discussed New York State’s Universal Pre-K (UPK) Program, which functions differently from Georgia’s *Bright from the Start*. The state currently serves 27% of four-year-olds (70,779 of 220,000 in the state) with a budget of \$254.70 million. The state takes funds and funnels them through the local school districts. The money districts receive is based on a per-child formula. The districts must use the money for prekindergarten but can decide how to use the money. The UPK program is designed as a public-private partnership and requires collaboration and an advisory board process. It requires a competitive process for selection of eligible agencies.

Whereas in 1998, most of the programs were housed in public school settings, after 9/11 in 2001, monies were frozen, so districts decided to redistribute monies to focus more on community based organizations (CBOs). Districts realized it is easier and cheaper to go through CBOs since public schools did not have the needed classroom space and would

require funds to build and expand facilities. Currently, most of the funds go to CBOs. This is also a cheaper method because teachers in public schools get paid salaries equivalent to a public school teacher, whereas UPK teachers in CBOs receive smaller salaries set by the CBO (even though teaching requirements are the same regardless of setting). The difference in salary has forced many teachers to leave CBOs for public schools where they can get paid more. All UPK teachers are now required to have a BA and teacher certification plus Masters within 5 years. A waiver offered a grace period for acquisition of certification; however, the waiver was frozen after 9/11. Currently, 97% of teachers have certification.

Ms. Gallagher stressed that it is important to think about roadblocks ahead of time and to have a guaranteed source of money allotted to the program in case of an event that may freeze funding. She explained that communities need a full-day (6 ½ hrs) program, but this year most can only afford to offer half-day services. She also warned that private programs will complain that they will be put out of business, but as long as there is a public-private partnership, only the poorest quality child care centers may be forced to close, and that is ultimately in the best interest of children.

Deliberations

Following the guest presentations, the Task Force deliberated on several issues. Dr. Grafwallner began the discussion by asking if any of the Task Force members had questions for Ms. Moore or Ms. Gallagher while they were still present at the meeting. Ms. Bacquie asked if the Task Force could obtain copies of the contracts that Georgia and New York use with their providers. Both speakers agreed. There was a question of what kind of monitoring device Georgia uses. Ms. Moore explained that each program is visited twice a year by monitoring staff. Georgia provides training support for teachers on curriculum, on best practices in literacy and math, and on the program quality assessment instrument (PQA). One of the main strengths of *Bright from the Start* is that it is based on research by Georgia State University.

It was clarified that family child care programs may apply for state prekindergarten dollars in New York State but not in Georgia. Ms. Gallagher explained that many family providers are actually retired prekindergarten teachers.

A question was raised about UPK teachers leaving CBOs to teach in public schools where they are paid more. Ms. Gallagher stated that the situation creates a career ladder for prekindergarten teachers that was not available before. Now that teachers are required to become certified and earn a BA, they can move to a different setting with more opportunities. No private provider wants to lose teachers to public schools, but at least it is an option for teachers. Parents, however, prefer CBOs with wraparound services over public school settings with shorter school days. New York has a rich history of service delivery.

It was stated that third grade state assessment required by NCLB puts pressure on elementary school principals and thus makes them interested in high quality

prekindergarten for their future students. Private programs can work with public school settings to ease the transition to school. Georgia is organizing a pre-k thru 3rd grade alignment due to assessment in 3rd grade. Ms. Moore stated that the state needs to manage the pushdown and use the data to see where program is valuable and where it needs work.

It was agreed that the weakest component of New York State's UPK program is that it does not have a stable amount of funding—it is not written into the legislature. The state wants prekindergarten to be funded the same way as 2nd or 3rd grade. It was noted that this is something the Task Force needs to consider.

Dr. Grafwallner stated that Task Force is charged with deciding what the performance indicators of quality programs should be. There are already a number of things in place as indicated on the distributed Goals and Purposes Chart (2i), such as early learning standards and environmental standards. Dr. Ramey mentioned that there is a national study that has identified key performance indicators that predict positive outcomes.

Mr. Rosenberg pointed out that other states have shown that it is important to use the same model throughout the state and to have a universal model—not targeted. It was agreed that this is the direction to go in.

Ms. Bacquie asked if written in the contracts of other states there are standards for the classroom environment. Maryland already has quality learning standards in place and it would not be beneficial to remove or recreate what is already working well. Dr. Grafwallner agreed that using the quality early learning standards that are in place would be a good idea.

Dr. Grafwallner noted that it appears to matter whether the program is half-day or full-day; we lose on the impact if it is only half-day. Ms. Bacquie mentioned that in some Judy Centers there is a prekindergarten program for 2 ½ hrs with wraparound services in afternoon so children get full day treatment, and this method seems to work well. Dr. Klein also stressed that it is important to have wraparound services for working parents. A half-day program, regardless of whether it is free, will not be user-friendly for parents who will need to pay for morning and after-school care. Ms. Woodward followed by saying we need to meet parents' needs and have a full-day program or wraparound services. Additionally, transportation is currently a big issue that needs to be addressed. If working families cannot transport children to a private center for prekindergarten, there needs to be a bus system responsible to do so.

Ms. Woodward also noted that it is difficult to blend two different philosophies of teaching/learning. For example, the Downtown Baltimore Child Care (DBCC) has an emergent play-based curriculum which parents like very much, but is very different from the Baltimore City Public School prekindergarten requirements. She stressed that adapting to standards requiring specific structured curricular elements takes a lot to work. Teachers should have more options as to how to teach and parents should have a say as to what curriculum is implemented in their children's programs.

It was discussed that there needs to be a compromise between the goals we have and what teachers are capable of, and be realistic about teaching requirements. Child care teachers with an Associate of Arts (AA) degree (90 hours of coursework) do not qualify as certified teachers and cannot teach in public schools. Many Head Start teachers do not have the BA required to teach state funded prekindergarten, and even with scholarships that have been offered, many teachers have not gotten degrees. It is good to want to move teachers along to get degrees, but there should be incentives and encouragement (e.g., give teachers time off to go to school; give monetary rewards).

Dr. Hunt suggested that we have our goal be a 4-year degree, but have a waiver or mechanism to get teachers to where we want to be. We should not put our standards too low because that will affect the quality of services children will get. Ms. Woodward concurred that the higher we can set the expectations, the better. We need to think of what the parents want: they want educators to be educated at the highest degree.

However, we need to address the disparity between private and public sectors as far as salary and benefits. There is a big issue of compensation to keep pre teachers in the private sector. Almost all students with a 4-year degree go into public prekindergarten programs in public schools, not child care settings, to earn more money. The teacher certification piece is the hardest part to decide due to funding issues. We need to work on building public support for teachers. It was suggested that we look for data that would provide us with information about how to get to a BA, or different degree components that can be required.

As far as curricular standards, the Task Force discussed the importance of having the curriculum aligned with the Voluntary State Curriculum Standards already in place (Creative Curriculum, High/Scope, Scholastics Literacy, etc.). Mr. Rosenberg stated that we should allow programs to choose the curriculum, or components of different curricula, to allow for diversity of implementation. Maryland already uses the Work Sampling System for assessment purposes, which has demonstrated to be a successful method for preschool aged children.

Dr. Grafwallner reminded the Task Force that part of their charge is to look at funding options for the state's universal preschool program. He stated that he is looking into resources to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of Maryland's infrastructure, looking at different options (three- and four-year-olds, or just four-year-olds). He said he is working with Pre-K Now and the state might get some support to conduct such a study.

There was a question about how many children in the state we expect to be serving. A response was given that there are about 75,000 children at each age level cohort in the state, thus, approximately 150,000 three- and four-year-olds in total. Currently, 20,000 children do not go to public kindergarten, thus, we expect them to not participate in a universal preschool program, reducing the total to 110,000, if serving both threes and fours.

Dr. Grafwallner suggested that at the next meeting the Task Force begin to prepare a summary of the legislative report due to the Governor by December, 2007. He asked if anyone had any additional ideas for topics to cover or speakers to invite. He mentioned that at the next meeting there will be presentations by community groups. It was suggested that the Task Force let other organizations know about the Task Force's efforts in order to gain public support, or invite them to come speak about their advocacy work (e.g., Fight Crime/ Invest in Kids).

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 26, 2007 at the Loyola College Graduate Center in Columbia, Maryland.

Meeting concluded at 3:05pm.

Resources

(Provided by Task Force members for distribution)

Quality Counts 2007: From Cradle to Career. Connecting American Education From Birth Through Adulthood. Education Week, 26(17). January 4, 2007.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2007/01/04/index.html> (Rolf Grafwallner)

National Association of State Boards of Education. *Fulfilling the Promise of Preschool: The report of the NASBE Study Group on Creating High-Quality Early Learning Environments*. October, 2006.

http://www.nasbe.org/publications/Early_Childhood_Study_Group/early_childhood_policy_update.html (Rolf Grafwallner)

National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). *New Study Shows Arkansas Better Chance State Preschool Program Improves Language and Math Abilities of Children*. January 25, 2007.

Executive summary: <http://nieer.org/mediacenter/index.php?PressID=70>

Full report: <http://nieer.org/resources/research/ArkansasYear1.pdf> (Janine Bacquie)

National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics. *A Demographic Portrait of Young Hispanic Children in the United States*. January, 2007.

(Document attached). (Janine Bacquie)

“The National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics was established in May 2004 for the purpose of identifying major educational challenges facing Hispanic children throughout the United States from birth through the primary grades and making recommendations for actions.” www.ecehispanic.org

Foundation for Child Development. *PK-3: A New Beginning for Publicly Supported Education*. October, 2005.

(Document attached). (Janine Bacquie)

Kenneth C. Land. *2006 Report: The Foundation for Child Development Child and Youth Well-Being Index (CWI), 1975-2004, with Projections for 2005*. March 15, 2006.
(Document attached). (Janine Bacquie)