

**Task Force of Universal Preschool Education
Meeting Summary
April 26, 2007**

Task Force members in attendance:

Rolf Grafwallner (Maryland State Department of Education), Sandy Skolnik (Maryland Committee for Children), Mark Rosenberg (Maryland State Child Care Association), Garland Thomas (substituting for Tracie Farrell, Governor's Office for Children), Debra Metheny (Board of Education of Allegany County), Mary Hunt (College of Southern Maryland), Veronica Land Davis (Maryland Head Start Association), Janine Bacquie (Montgomery County Public Schools), Gene Counihan (Maryland Chamber of Commerce), Arlene Ennis (Family Child Care)

Staff in attendance:

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

Welcome and Introductions:

Rolf Grafwallner and Sandy Skolnik, Co-Chairpersons for the Task Force, welcomed the Task Force members and guests. Task Force members introduced themselves to the group. The minutes from the last meeting on December 7, 2006 were accepted without revisions by Task Force members. Dr. Grafwallner explained to Task Force members that there would be a series of testimonies from the public during the morning session followed by deliberations. The task for the day would be to address Goal #3 on the list of Task Force Purposes and Goals, which states: "Design proposals to support the professional development of early childhood education staff, which may include: (i) Identifying appropriate and desired education levels of staff; (ii) Recommending a compensation plan related to educational levels and experience that recognizes the value of early childhood education; (iii) Promoting mentor relationships in quality programs for educators and aspiring educators who seek to enter or improve the field as an early childhood education teacher; (iv) Identifying incentives and rewards to encourage ongoing professional development; and (v) Expanding access to and the creation of innovative strategies for professional development opportunities." All testimonies from registered speakers would be addressing the issue of professional development and teacher certification qualifications.

Public Hearing- Registered Speakers:

Dr. Barbara Payne Shelton, Consultant, ECE Consultants, LLC and Adjunct Faculty—Towson University

As an experienced early childhood teacher educator, Dr. Shelton described that while it is highly unlikely that Maryland has a sufficient number of teachers certified in early childhood to staff a universal pre-k program immediately, it should be our ultimate goal to have all teachers teaching in state-funded preschool classrooms be highly certified as

required of elementary school teachers. However, this goal can only be reached within a reasonable period of time. She stated, “Lowering the requirements for pre-k teachers would set a dangerous precedent as well as give the erroneous impression that those who work with younger children do not need the knowledge base in terms of pedagogy and teaching strategies which teachers of older children need.” She suggested a gradual phase-in of the certification requirement to address the lack of currently available certified teachers, particularly in private child care centers. Additionally, it was pointed out that instructional assistants typically do not have the same qualifications as the classroom teacher, however, as we proceed forward, we should require teaching assistants to hold an associates degree.

Dr. Shelton strongly suggested that the Task Force consider the creation of a new birth to age five certification category, similar to the certification in Nebraska, which would overlap with the current pre-k to third grade early childhood certification. This new certification would focus on developmentally appropriate pedagogy and teaching strategies for children of this age group, and provide opportunities for students to work specifically with preschool-aged children, which is often not the case with the current pre-k to third grade certification.

Additionally, since the implementation of a universal preschool program would require many full-time preschool teachers to return to school, Dr. Shelton expressed the need to create programs designed to meet the needs and work schedules of these non-traditional students. Currently, there is no known early childhood teacher certification program that offers courses at a time convenient for full-time teachers. Dr. Shelton recommended that at least one college or university in the state develop a model program based upon the new certification category that addresses the needs of adult students, which would then be expanded to multiple sites to increase access throughout the state. In her final recommendation, she suggested the state provide financial incentives and rewards to working early childhood professionals to encourage and support them in the process of earning their degree, such as scholarships, tuition reimbursement, and salary increases.

Questions:

Is there any research that shows how the level of teacher education relates to child outcomes?

Dr. Shelton responded that, in general, research shows that the greater the level of education, the better the outcomes for children, but the specialization matters. Degrees in early childhood education or child development are better than related fields. In her experience, teachers certified in elementary education sometimes have a difficult time adjusting their teaching strategies to teach younger children when they do not have a background in child development and developmentally appropriate practice.

How long should the phase-in period last?

Dr. Shelton responded that the phase-in period should be longer than 4 years since that is the amount of time required to earn a Bachelors degree.

Flora Gee, Co-Chair, Public Policy, Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children

Ms. Flora Gee spoke on behalf of John Surr who provided written testimony but was unable to attend the meeting. She stated to the Task Force that the Maryland AEYC, the Maryland chapter of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), believes that NAEYC Accreditation is the gold standard for child care center quality, particularly in regards to its new standards on professional competence. She recommended that Maryland align its own accreditation system with NAEYC's, or encourage centers in Maryland that have publicly funded preschool classrooms to become accredited by NAEYC. She described how the new NAEYC Accreditation system systematically moves teachers toward the Bachelors degree with a specialization in early childhood education. NAEYC's goal is that by the end of 2007 all teachers will have a Child Development Associate (CDA), by the end of 2012 all teachers will have an Associates degree, and by 2020 all teachers would have a Bachelors degree. Therefore, within 13 years, current child care teachers in NAEYC accredited programs should have their Bachelors degree. Similarly, the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) Accreditation would qualify registered family child care programs as long as a similar push toward certification was involved. Ms. Gee suggested that if consensus is not reached on this certification goal that an alternative approach would be to accept Tier 4 qualifications under the Office of Credentialing Tiered Reimbursement program, which requires accreditation as well as an annual ECERS or FDCERS classroom environment assessment to ensure classroom quality.

In regards to compensation, Ms. Gee recommended that salaries relate to educational levels and experience. Preschool teachers in state-funded programs should have the same pay and benefits if they have the same qualifications regardless of their settings—public schools or child care centers. She also suggested that the State create and fund a mentoring program to increase professional development in the area of teaching strategies.

To increase professional development, Ms. Gee recommended increasing the amounts and availability of scholarships for college-level courses in early childhood, and reducing unnecessary qualifications for the scholarships (e.g., full-time enrollment status); providing well-publicized loan forgiveness for years of service; approving and articulating on-line courses and more community college courses in 4-year colleges; establishing more core of knowledge courses where an unmet demand exists; giving more courses in Spanish and other languages with high local usage; re-examining prerequisites unrelated to early childhood; rewriting certification requirements and other regulations that limit the transfer of high quality early childhood education courses taken elsewhere; funding tutoring/coaching programs to help ECE college students to pass their PRAXIS exams, especially in mathematics; adding public transportation services to community colleges; giving financial incentives to providers to release time for their employees for professional development; and offering financial incentives to providers for post-graduate education in early childhood courses. Ms. Gee stated that the lack of adequate compensation is seen as the main barrier to professional development. The state can

improve access to professional development opportunities by providing financial incentives to colleges and certification trainers to encourage them to provide training courses at child care center sites. This would allow full-time teachers to participate in course and professional development trainings after work hours closer to their workplace and would alleviate the troubles of commuting distances to the nearest college or university.

Questions:

Would tiered credentialing system be something we should consider?

Ms. Gee responded, “Yes,” that the Maryland AEYC would approve a tiered credentialing system in which current teachers can move up the ladder to achieve their certification and be rewarded for each tier they reach. She agreed that there needs to be a phase-in period as there are many uncertified teachers in the field. She also expressed the need for mentoring and technical assistance programs through which certified teachers would assist less trained teachers in the process of working towards their degrees. Ms. Gee also recommended that certification programs only send their students to accredited preschool programs.

Ms. Debbie Enright, Vice President of Public Policy, Maryland State Family Child Care Association

Ms. Enright discussed the recommended minimum education level for family child care providers. She proposed two tracts that would lead to the required certification. Tract 1 would require providers to have a minimum of a CDA or an AA in early childhood education/child development, be a registered family child care provider in good standing, NAFCC accredited, Maryland Child Care Credential level 4+ or higher, and trained on the MMSR. The rationale for this tract is that providers work 12 hours days and longer, work year-round, and many work on weekends and overnight. Many providers are already at a level 4+ and receive 24 hours of continued training per year and are not interested in returning to school to attain a higher degree. Tract 2 would require the same minimum standards as Tract 1, but would also require the pursuit of further educational advancements and professional development.

Ms. Enright recommended that teachers be compensated according to their educational level and years of experience teaching prekindergarten. The poor pay of preschool teachers prevents programs from hiring and retaining highly effective teachers, which lowers preschool quality and leads to negative outcomes for children. Mentoring and providing technical support are two necessary components of a successful program. Ms. Enright advocated that peer mentoring be implemented instead of mentoring by a superior as it builds teamwork and allows teachers to feel more comfortable and reach their goals.

Suggested incentives for continued professional development include: Hope Scholarships; loan forgiveness programs; rewards for increased Maryland Credential level; stipends towards teacher trainings, seminars, and professional development; college credit applied to qualified trainings including fees required to obtain the credits;

creation of annual pre-k conference for all pre-k professionals in Maryland where they can have access to the most current resources and research regarding curriculum, teaching strategies, and child development; and yearly bonuses. Ms. Enright also suggested creating a quarterly newsletter, website, and email listserve to provide information specifically to providers in the program. Participation in professional development would increase if there were evening and weekend meetings, a substitute pool for providers, increased bilingual trainings, as well as reimbursement for attended trainings.

Questions:

Would trainings be culturally competent for family child care providers of different language and cultural backgrounds?

Yes, there are many providers with limited English proficiency who provide services for children in their homes. Many have the educational background from their country of origin, but when they came to the United States, their credentials did not transfer. They began a program in their home, since they were unable to get a job teaching in a school.

How long would it take for all providers to become certified?

Ms. Enright replied that there are many family child care providers that do not yet have a CDA or AA. Providers cannot just go out and get a Bachelors degree. There needs to be a mentoring system in place that supports teachers to get their degrees and certification. The process will take time.

What would be an appropriate monitoring mechanism to ensure quality?

The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R), national accreditation, peer mentoring program, licensing supervisor to make sure the program is meeting state standards, and the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR).

Carol Bender, M.D., Montgomery County LAP

Dr. Bender, a high school science teacher, physician, and businesswoman by training, spoke to the Task Force on the issue of desired levels of education of the staff. She discussed that her volunteer work with Montgomery County Leadership in Action (LAP) led to her enrollment in a Child Growth and Development course at Montgomery College to learn more about the development of young children. Dr. Bender shared some of the information on the stages of development that she learned, highlighting the impact of the early formative years on later school achievement, and thus, the importance of high quality early care and education. She stated that it is imperative that preschoolers be under the care of trained child care personnel. “The best chance we can give these children is through care by educated, experienced, and well qualified child care personnel,” she concluded.

Questions:

What do you think about the idea of giving parents a choice about where to enroll their children?

Dr. Bender replied that it is important to give parent options or else they are not going to buy into helping their child. Dr. Bender described that the best situation would be for every business (e.g., banks, hotels, etc.) to offer on-site child care for employees. She discussed that businesses should be asked to provide support and funding for high quality child care for their employees. Businesses can be convinced that on-site care would lead to better work attendance, less absenteeism, less turnover, less workmen's compensation cases, less money for workforce training, and greater diversity of employees from the top to bottom. Dr. Bender mentioned her own experience working with PNC Bank to discuss having a child care center on site to support families.

What do you think about a mentoring program?

She discussed the need to establish a program to mentor at-risk families from anything to helping with organizing bills to finding a job or starting a child care business. She personally mentors a family to assist them with their needs. Bellsville Elementary School is establishing a mentoring program with the Kiwanis Club of Potomac to provide support families and they have seen an improvement.

Kathy Dodson, Education Specialist, Head Start Unit, Montgomery County Public Schools, filling in for Claudia Simmons, Supervisor

Ms. Dodson stated that pre-k in the public schools in MCPS is working and is great for working families and children. The instructional program in the Montgomery County Pre-K and Head Start programs is aligned with the Maryland State Voluntary Curriculum/MMSR, and the children entering kindergarten from these programs experience a smooth transition and are ready for challenging learning experiences. The Early Childhood Observation Record (ECOR) assessment shows that children enrolled in these programs made significant gains in cognitive, linguistic, physical and social/emotional domains over the course of the prekindergarten year, with English language learners, children from impoverished families, and children with disabilities demonstrating the greatest improvements from fall to spring.

To ensure a high quality preschool program, Ms. Dodson stated that programs must include the following components:

- parent involvement, since when parents feel that they are a part of their children's education, they can support their children's learning at home;
- quality standards, including credentialed early childhood teachers, developmentally appropriate materials, and a thoughtfully arranged environment to support the curriculum;
- training on the subject matter, the pedagogy of teaching, and the assessment of three- and four-year-old children;
- supervision and mentoring to encourage and sustain quality;
- health, nutrition, and social services for families to increase the likelihood of success.

Ms. Dodson also explained that these recommendations are aligned with the National Institute for Early Education Research's 10 quality Benchmarks for High-Quality Preschool Education.

“These benchmarks call for:

- *Curriculum standards.* The state must have comprehensive curriculum standards that are specific to prekindergarten and cover the domains of language/literacy, mathematics, science, social/emotional skills, cognitive development, health and physical development, and social studies.
- *Teacher degree requirement.* Lead teachers in both public and private settings must be required to hold at least a B.A.
- *Teacher specialized training requirement.* Pre-service requirements for lead teachers should include specialized training in prekindergarten. Kindergarten endorsements and elementary teaching certificates do not qualify.
- *Assistant teacher degree requirement.* Assistant teachers are required to hold a CDA or equivalent training.
- *Teacher in-service requirement.* Teachers must be required to attend at least 15 clock hours of professional development per year.
- *Maximum class size.* Class sizes must be limited to no more than 20 children for both three- and four-year-olds.
- *Staff-child ratio.* At least one staff member must be present per 10 children in a classroom for three- and four-year-olds.
- *Screening/referral requirements.* Programs are required to provide both screening and referral services covering at least vision, hearing, and health.
- *Required support services.* Programs must offer, either directly or through active referral, at least one type of additional support services for families of participants or the participants themselves. Types of services may include parent conferences or home visits, parenting support or training, referral to social services, and information related to nutrition.
- *Meal requirements.* All participants must be offered at least one meal per day. Snacks are not counted as meals.

Questions:

How can other jurisdictions that haven't had a similar commitment as Montgomery County to their pre-k program start to implement some of the changes within their own LEAs?

Ms. Dodson explained that developing partnerships between the public school system and the child care community would benefit everyone. They can work together and share curriculum and training opportunities.

How much would a program that meets the 10 standards cost per child?

Ms. Dodson responded that the costs per child for a half-day program = \$5,000, not counting other infrastructure already in place; \$18,000 to \$23,000 per child for half day comprehensive program plus wrap around services. Debbie Shepard, the Administrator of

Early Childhood Services in Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Services, explained that MCPS is struggling with this issue of how much it will cost per child. There is a meeting planned to discuss this very issue of costs. Ms. Shepard agreed to provide that information to the Task Force.

Are children with special needs included in this program?

Yes, and children with an IEP receive supports. Ten percent of children in the current program have an identified special need. Some are in inclusion classrooms, others whose needs are greater than what can be met in the classroom are placed in a special education classroom.

Pillar Torres, Executive Director, Centro Familia

Ms. Torres addressed expanding access to and the creation of innovative strategies for professional development opportunities. She discussed the growing Latino immigrant population in the State of Maryland. Combining the increase in the foreign-born population and the estimated immigrant births immigration may be adding as many as 76,280 persons annually to the metro area's population, many of whom have limited English proficiency. Forty-five percent of U.S. children younger than five years are minorities with Latinos being the nation's largest and fastest-growing minority group. From 2004 to 2005, Latinos accounted for 70 percent of the growth in children younger than five. Ms. Torres explained that the Task Force must keep in mind as they make their recommendations who the children are that will be served by a new state preschool program.

She also explained that the future early care and education work force are foreign-born, limited-English proficiency women. More than half of family providers report speaking another language at home other than English, and 99% of child care centers in Montgomery County have bilingual staff, with 81% employing Spanish-speaking staff.

As the Task Force deliberates on professional development strategies and programs that will improve the educational capacity of preschool teachers, Ms. Torres recommends that the Task Force take into account that for limited English proficiency (LEP) family child care providers, there must be a separate ladder that allows them to reach the required certification levels. She proposed that the terminal certification requirements would include a CDA and NAFCC accreditation. Included in her professional development ladder, there would be a home-visiting program that supports environmental quality and safety, practical application of MMSR & Work Sampling System (WSS), and individualized curriculum and program design. Providers would be given technical assistance and mentoring to obtain, maintain and progress through MSDE's credentialing system.

The proposed ladder includes several key components that are unique to these populations, such as:

1. Cultural Brokering;

2. Mentoring and peer professional development support;
3. Training in native language;
4. Technical Assistance;
5. Bridge training; and
6. Content-based English as a second language.

It is not enough to offer some training in other languages or to translate materials. Ms. Torres explained that all training should be conducted in the native language—primarily Spanish—so that teachers in training can best understand the information being taught. Meanwhile, teachers would take English classes with content focused on early education.

About 77 percent of language minority children are in family child care due to lower costs, greater availability, more flexible hours, and cultural values. Ms. Torres emphasized that this means that if the State is going to implement universal preschool and meet the needs of low-income, language minority children, then family childcare must be included as an option for families. She also recommended that rather than implement a “one size fits all” approach to achieve the desired outcomes, the Task Force should incorporate other quality frameworks that are built on each community’s needs. Child and Family Network Centers should be created to offer services to families, such as family literacy and ESOL, which could also provide employment to parents as teachers.

In her final statements Ms. Torres recommended: (1) using creative approaches to reach culturally and linguistically diverse communities; (2) appointing a group of representatives from the culturally and linguistically diverse communities to work in an advisory capacity with MSDE to create a statewide agenda of priorities for cultural and linguistic issues as they pertain to early care and education; (3) helping language minority providers establish local family childcare associations or networks; (4) encouraging policy-makers to visit local culturally and linguistically diverse communities for themselves to appreciate the real day-to-day issues families in these communities face; (5) allocating funds to expand training to LEP providers and leverage other resources like Work Force Development dollars to build the professional capacity of this population; (6) targeting resources to provide supports and materials in languages other than English, including college-level classes for early care and education language minority staff in their home language, teacher resources/training manuals in various languages, and children's books set in culturally and linguistically appropriate settings; (7) providing training opportunities that are culturally and linguistically relevant; (8) promoting dissemination strategies in which research findings on dual language acquisition can be applied to teaching approaches and classroom settings; and (9) leading discussions intended to de-stigmatize dual language acquisition and educate educators and the public that bilingualism is not an impediment to children's development.

Questions:

What do you think of LEP teachers in child care centers, not family child care?

Ms. Torres responded that teacher-mentoring programs should be designed so that a certified English speaking teacher could mentor an uncertified LEP teacher. She

explained that it is important to have another ladder for these people to support them in reaching their goals.

Can this ladder be used for other non-English speakers besides Spanish speakers?

She responded that the ladder is individualized depending on individual's needs, commitment, finances. Realistically it should take about 2 years to complete certification according to her proposed model; however, some may finish in just one year. Other teachers may go on to college after their CDA.

Why is workforce development funding not being used for early childcare providers?

Ms. Torres responded that Maryland does not have enough teachers to teach pre-k. We have not convinced workforce development in the State and made a case that this is a need in the State of MD. The Task Force needs to look into this more to see if there is money available. ***

Would distance learning be appropriate?

Ms. Torres explained that distance learning would be a sufficient way of providing training courses in multiple sites at the same time. Classes in one site could be televised to other areas of the State where there is a need for training early child care providers. Online trainings may not be appropriate with this community, but interactive, televised programs would benefit those who want to attend school but are not living near a school where they are able to enroll in the required courses.

Christina Giovinazzo, Executive Director, Montgomery Child Care Association

Ms. Giovinazzo discussed the appropriate and desired education levels of staff. As Executive Director of the MCCA, which serves 1000 infants to school age children, she explained that the State runs the risk of leaving the best child care teachers behind if educational standards are raised too quickly, without adequate support, and are solely focused on traditional college education. She explained that Maryland's current qualifications are already hard for centers to meet at the salaries they can afford to pay, and they struggle to find staff to fill the centers now. NAEYC's new educational standards are proving to be an insurmountable hurdle for the best centers, even though they are being phased in over time. MSDE's accreditation is much more flexible in that it recognizes that there are many paths to becoming a qualified child care provider and provides a reasonable timeline for improving staff qualifications.

Ms. Giovinazzo stated that requiring a 4-year degree for child care staff is unrealistic. Increasing staff qualifications will have significant economic consequences for centers and could reduce the supply of child care workers, reduce the number of child care slots, and significantly raise fees for families. Centers cannot support highly qualified teachers unless a new funding stream appears to pay the increased tuition costs, increased starting salaries and increased salaries to *retain* college-degreed staff and compete with the public schools. Currently, a college-degreed child care teacher can expect to be offered half the starting salary of an equally qualified kindergarten teacher, with few of the benefits. She

recommended that any increase in standards should be phased in over time with adequate funding streams available to pay for both tuition and compensation. Additionally, there should be alternative education standards for experienced teachers in the field, and we should include teachers with degrees from a wide range of fields to provide diverse experiences for children and not limit degrees to early childhood education.

To increase access to professional development opportunities, Ms. Giovinazzo recommended that community-based trainers be included in the process of designing any training modules, instead of focusing exclusively on community colleges as a source of training. She explained that there is a need for training that is meaningful and relevant to the practical, daily work that child care providers do. Providers are frequently low-income, often native speakers of languages other than English, and frequently have language and literacy issues. Professional development activities must meet the needs of these teachers.

Lastly, Ms. Giovinazzo explained that the majority of child care teachers did not graduate school with the idea of becoming a child care professional; they enter the field from a variety of different paths, with a range of experiences and backgrounds. She recommended that the State be flexible and creative to be able to meet child care teachers where they are and entice them further along the path of a child care career.

Questions:

Do you feel there is a problem with space with public schools for a public pre-k program?

Ms. Giovinazzo explained that MCCA already has a program in a public school that provides wraparound services for children. The program is located in the school's great room. She said it is difficult to find space even now.

Do you see yourself as part of a universal preschool program?

Ms. Giovinazzo responded, "Yes," that they would support such a program if there was time and funding to implement it. Teachers are paid so low and cannot afford to go to college, and parents cannot afford to pay higher prices for highly educated teachers. Therefore, the State must be willing to provide the funding for salary increases.

Gene Counihan asked why there was not representation from other counties other than Montgomery County. Dr. Grafwallner replied that all counties were invited, but there is not as much development in the area of early childhood education in other counties. Montgomery County is more advanced in the way of handling these issues than in other counties. The Task Force expressed concern that there may not be political support for funding universal preschool state-wide; the State needs to build alliances with business to join efforts, but if there is not support and interest in other jurisdictions, it may be difficult to implement.

****NOTE: The Task Force will gather statistics on the current tiers where child care providers are (how many with CDA versus AA versus BA, etc.) so that we know how*

many people need to move through the process of getting certified and how much it will cost?

Lunch

Task Force Deliberations

Members were asked to take out the worksheet addressing Purposes and Goals Item #3. Five issues to be discussed include:

1. Identify appropriate and desired education levels of staff;
2. Recommending a compensation plan related to educational levels and experience that recognizes the value of early childhood education;
3. Promoting mentor relationships in quality programs for educators and aspiring educators who seek to enter or improve the field as an early childhood education teacher;
4. Identify incentives and rewards to encourage ongoing professional development;
5. Expand access to and the creation of innovative strategies.

Task Force members were asked to reflect on the presentations they heard and the information that pertains to each of the 5 points under Item #3. Responses were written down to be discussed later.

Identify appropriate and desired education levels of staff

- Ultimately a 4 year degree with certification in early childhood
- BA in non-related field not appropriate—must be closely related
- Flexible hours for professional development and continuing education courses (evenings, weekends, etc.)
- Resources available to assist with process of getting certified
- Different levels or tracks to certification
- Assistant teachers- CDA or AA (AA now required in Title 1 public schools) for prekindergarten
- Cultural sensitivity to needs of immigrant or English language proficient teachers
- Career development ladder must account for current workforce- not just new teachers entering the field
- There should be a phase-in period
- Possibility of birth-5 certification category
- There are no programs in the state that provide a birth to 5 certification or ECE program with flexible hours for working teachers

Recommending a compensation plan related to educational levels and experience that recognizes the value of early childhood education

- Raise teacher salaries (Child care teachers are currently subsidizing working parents and taking a lower pay)
- Compensation equal across public and private settings

- Money for tuition
- Compensation based on increased credentialing and standards
- Compensation or stipend or incentives to increase education
- Need to analyze credentials from foreign countries to determine education level and certification status
- Need to develop cost implications when mandating all teachers to have a BA
- Evidence from other states shows us that programs should be 6.5 hours/day and universal
- Compensation for model to assist bilingual providers to achieve certification and accreditation
- Extra money for training bilinguals; phase-in plan in model
- Using workforce development dollars to help

Promoting mentor relationships in quality programs for educators and aspiring educators who seek to enter or improve the field as an early childhood education teacher

- Peer mentoring is very successful
- Importance of linking with national or local organizations so that teachers have opportunities for professional development
- Function of resource and referral agencies in peer mentoring
- Higher education internships
- Sending out emails, newsletters, online resources
- Local education agencies (LEAs) mentoring child care staff
- Coaching and mentoring must be diverse to meet needs of providers (e.g., providing training at centers)
- Longtime consistency
- Financial incentives for mentors
- Mentors need to be qualified and have best practices in order to mentor and coach
- Mentor is not an evaluator but a coach

Identify incentives and rewards to encourage ongoing professional development

- Stipends for trainings
- Loan forgiveness
- Resources for training
- Transportation
- Increased compensation for achieving credentials
- Articulation from community-based trainers and community college
- Funding for tutoring/coaching to pass PRAXIS, particularly in math
- Organized pool of substitutes for family child care providers-
- Network of providers to eliminate isolation
- Simplify and reduce unnecessary qualifications—or eliminate barriers—for scholarships and advertise them more widely (e.g., Some scholarships require students to take 6 credits/semester, but many teachers are part-time students and take only one three-credit course per semester)

- Internships offered on-site; compensated placements in field
- Long-term practicum for professional development

Expand access to and the creation of innovative strategies

- Courses can be implemented in multiple sites at once; distance learning via internet or televised classroom
- Professional development models for non-English speaking providers and providers with other needs
- Tiered approach or career ladders with different timelines to reach credentialing
- Increased funding for tuition so teachers can afford to enroll in courses
- Grants from local associations
- Providing training in a native language with content-based ESOL classes
- Providing release time for teachers
- Onsite trainings, flexible hours and locations

During deliberations, a Task Force member pointed out page 2 from Dr. Shelton's testimony that stated not to lower standards for preschool teachers but to provide supports needed to reach goals. The Task Force discussed options of what the minimum required level of education should be for head classroom teachers. The current MSDE credentialing system has 7 tiers (6 numbered tiers plus level 4+) and teachers earn a \$1,000 bonus when they reach the highest level. If the Task Force adopts the existing articulation system, there would be three different tracks for teachers to choose to reach level 6, the highest possible level. Two of these options require a Bachelor's degree. One of these tracks requires a degree in early childhood education or a related field; the other can be in an unrelated field. It was pointed out, however, that Dr. Shelton warned that teachers with elementary education degrees may not have knowledge of appropriate practice and child development for teaching preschool. The third track requires an Associate's degree in early childhood education with 15 hours of approved coursework.

Dr. Grafwallner stated that it might be more feasible to use the current credentialing system (at level 6) already in place in lieu of teacher certification only. Such a system would be easier to monitor than a grant system in which programs would apply for funding with a grant proposal describing how much they will be paying teachers (which is similar to Georgia). He said that the Task Force did not need to decide during today's meeting, but they would have to vote on one of these options once they had the feasibility study in June.

It was suggested by Dr. Shelton that a new birth to five certification category be created. The Task Force needs to research what the benefits are of a birth to five certification over the current certification N to 3rd grade. The argument is that in a child care center teachers need to be able to switch from infant/toddlers classrooms to preschool classrooms; on the other hand, a birth to five certification may not be as good for a public school preschool teacher who may need to switch to a kindergarten or first grade

classroom. The Task Force agreed they needed more research on this issue. The University of Cincinnati might have information on birth to 5 certification programs.

There is an issue of retaining degreed preschool teachers in child care centers. Current Bachelor degreed teachers in a public school make approximately \$45,000 to \$50,000, which is sometimes more than twice as much as child care teachers and more money than a child care center director makes. The question is what salary can preschool teachers make to stay in centers rather than move into public school? To retain teachers with increased credentials larger bonuses may be necessary as well.

Another issue discussed is the length of time to provide for a phase-in of the new requirements. It was suggested that the proposal could be that within 5 years the State could meet this requirement. There was some debate over whether or not that would be a sufficient amount of time for teachers who are teaching full-time and taking one course a semester. Currently, 46 percent of child care staff in approved programs have a Bachelor's degree or are pursuing one. However, there is a problem in that many child care providers have reading and writing difficulties and need time to resolve these issues to complete their certification.

It was mentioned that the State should not have high preservice requirements as it will push people away rather than recruit teachers. At College of Southern Maryland, students can come in, take exam, and if they pass, they do not need to take the course. This is an option as well as transferring college credits from foreign institutions and offering distant-learning courses. Teachers need time to take prerequisites before they can enter the tiered system, but these methods would allow them to move up to a higher level more quickly.

There was a question of how higher education programs can restructure to provide courses to meet the needs of teachers. There are currently no 4-year higher education institutions in the state that provide evening or weekend courses in early childhood education. Not only work hours are problematic, but location as well. There is a need for community based organizations to hold classes for teachers on-site. Is there an incentive for higher education institutions to provide courses off campus at community locations? Community colleges bring professors into child care centers to offer 90 hour courses, but what about 4 year institutions? Are they willing to do this? Stipends could be given to preschool teachers to go to school since they cannot take one or two courses a semester while they are working full-time.

The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) should be at the center of professional development as it has expectations as to where children should be. Curriculum should be blended to ensure services and supports to children with special needs and children, from bilingual and/or immigrant families, and children from migrant and homeless families—all who deserve universal preschool.

Dr. Grafwallner closed the meeting by noting a few areas where there needs to be more discussion:

- look at birth to five certification with blended curriculum
- revise existing articulation agreements
- offer off campus courses and trainings for staff in early care and education
- explore options for credentialing (as well as benefits, health care coverage)-
Should we adapt level 6 as the standard from the credentialing system in preschool classrooms or replace the current system and require teacher certification only?

Next meeting June 7th

During the meeting the results of the feasibility study will be presented. Dr. Grafwallner stated that he would like to have it available at least in draft form so Task Force members can discuss the budget issue at the next meeting. Also, there will be testimonies concerning Purposes and Goals #2, which articulates the components of high quality programs and #6 - Evaluation and Monitoring.

The last meeting will be scheduled for September 27th at MSDE in Baltimore. Then Goal #4- Public Engagement will be discussed. The Task Force will have to draft their final recommendations to the Governor after that meeting. MSDE is in the process of identifying a writer for the final report.

Meeting concluded at 3:17pm.