

Task Force of Universal Preschool Education
Meeting Summary
June 7, 2007

Task Force members in attendance:

Rolf Grafwallner (Maryland State Department of Education), Mark Rosenberg (Maryland State Child Care Association), Garland Thomas (substituting for Tracie Farrell, Governor's Office for Children), Patricia Gordon (Maryland Association of Boards of Education), Mary Hunt (College of Southern Maryland), Elisa Klein (University System of Maryland), T. Sky Woodward (parent of child in preschool), Veronica Land Davis (Maryland Head Start Association), Janine Bacquie (Montgomery County Public Schools), Masoud Edalatkhani (substituting for 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, Co-Chairperson for the Task Force, welcomed the Task Force members and guests. He stated that Sandy Skolnik, Co-Chairperson for the Task Force, was unable to attend due to illness. Dr. Grafwallner explained to Task Force members that there would be a series of testimonies from the public during the morning session followed by a presentation of the results of the feasibility study conducted by Dr. Irani, economist from Towson University. The presentations and deliberations were to address items #2, #4 and #6 on the list of Task Force Purposes and Goals, which state:

- (2) Develop plans and identify resources needed to improve the quality and services of early childhood learning programs by:
 - (i) Determining performance indicators of quality programs;
 - (ii) Identifying and recommending quality assessment instruments for the purpose of addressing early learning needs in children;
 - (iii) Identifying strategies to expand the number of programs meeting national or State standards of quality through program accreditation;
 - (iv) Proposing incentives and rewards programs designed to increase overall program quality;
 - (v) Using any guidelines developed by the Maryland State Department of Education for preschool and early childhood education as guidelines for program improvement;
 - (vi) Identifying and promoting State and local coordination;
- (4) Create an implementation plan to motivate and promote the value of and participation in early childhood learning opportunities for parents and the general public, including the business community;
- (6) Identify or develop appropriate evaluation methods, including appropriate performance indicators that will allow monitoring, improvement, and accountability of any initiative it proposes.

The minutes from the last meeting on December 7, 2006 were accepted without revisions by Task Force members.

Public Hearing- Registered Speakers:

Charles Wainwright, President, Children's Enrichment Enterprises, Inc.

Mr. Wainwright presented information from his paper titled *Can the Public Schools Partner with Qualified Early Care and Education Programs to Help Alleviate Maryland's School Facilities Crisis?* During his testimony, Mr. Wainwright explained how both the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) accreditation systems are already in place in the State and should be maintained as they hold programs to the highest of quality standards. Also, the Work Sampling assessment system is currently being used in public pre-k programs; this assessment works well and is appropriate for use with young children, and should, therefore, continue to be used.

Mr. Wainwright discussed how the Maryland teacher credentialing program promotes staff morale and confidence, and has reduced staff turnover from 6 to 9%. Parent satisfaction is high and children's developmental progress is great as a result of teachers' increase in training and higher qualifications. He also noted that it would take approximately 10 years for a teacher with an Associates degree to get a Bachelor's degree if she goes to school part-time while working full-time.

Under the "Thornton Law," \$634 million was spent for schools, some of which was used to implement full-day kindergarten. Mr. Wainwright explained that most of money paid for relocatables was not put towards local coordination with community-based providers. Currently, 83% or 20 local school systems are not contracting or working with local providers, and in those 17% that do show local coordination, it is not clear whether a structured partnership exists. Mr. Wainwright recommended that, instead of wasting money on more relocatables at public schools, the Task Force should take advantage of the available space local community-based providers offer and develop local coordination between public schools and community-based programs.

A report released by the National Institute of Early Childhood Research (NIEER) showed that Maryland ranks 6th in the nation for the number of children served by a public prekindergarten program, but last in the amount of money being spent on the program. However, Dr. Grafwallner later pointed out that the NIEER report was incorrect and only calculated the amount from Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP) and divided it by the number of children being served by prekindergarten. A more recent report has a more accurate estimation as it includes the local and state education aid from the public schools that are implementing prekindergarten.

Questions:

Can the local centers implement the required state curriculum?

Yes, many programs that are already accredited by NAEYC or MSDE are implementing the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum.

What can family child care providers do to attract contracts?

If more money is spent on funding for prekindergarten, then there will be more opportunities to encourage providers to build contracts.

Sue Bull, Director of Community Affairs, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 500

In her testimony, Ms. Bull recommended that Maryland adopt a community-based model with wrap-around services that assist working families. She encouraged the Task Force to develop and implement a universal preschool system that focuses on improving workforce quality in order to build capacity for preschool programs and teachers. Ms. Bull suggested setting realistic goals and adapting multiple and flexible policies to support providers who want to become highly qualified. She stated the Maryland should encourage providers to work towards a Child Development Associate credential or Associate's degree in early childhood development, as well as consider developing evening programs for teachers to earn their Bachelor's degree. However, there should be a gradual phase-in period to allow working child care providers to earn their degrees over time. Teachers need on-going training opportunities, greater compensation and benefit packages, as well as scholarships and educational grants to attend school part-time.

Ms. Bull also recommended that Maryland develop and implement a universal preschool program that encourages family child care providers to be active providers in the community by offering preschool curriculum and services as well as wrap-around services during non-school hours. She highlighted two preschool programs that have successfully integrated family child care and early learning: the Los Angeles Universal Preschool Program (LAUP) and the Community Connections Program in Chicago. The LAUP program builds on the existing infrastructure and supply of providers and funds family child care to expand the availability of high quality services for children. The program uses a hub system through which family child care providers are brought together to receive support and mentoring from their peers, share resources, and enhance their professional development. Programs are measured on a 5-star quality rating system, which assesses a variety of factors, such as teacher qualifications, environmental quality, and teacher-child ratios. Participating programs must meet or exceed three stars to receive funding to deliver universal preschool services.

The Community Connections Program in Chicago successfully integrates family child care providers in preschool programs by providing funding to providers to offer high-quality wrap-around care and other services to children, including those attending part-day or part-week, center-based preschool programs. Center-based teachers visit the family child care providers to provide them with training, technical assistance, and books and resources to increase the quality of care during non-preschool hours. Participating providers receive full-day child care assistance payments even if a child is only enrolled in part-time family child care. That funding allows providers to devote extra time to work

with the infants and toddlers in their care and to increase quality initiatives, such as pursuing accreditation and higher credentials. Community Connections also develops partnerships with local community groups to connect family providers together so that they can learn and share with one other.

Lastly, Ms. Bull recommended that Maryland develop and implement a culturally sensitive evaluation plan that focuses on assessing program quality, identifying areas in need of improvement, and targeting resources to strengthen struggling programs.

Questions:

What is the cost per child for the LAUP?

The financial costs are not known, but that information can be found and made available to the Task Force.

How many children are these programs that you mentioned serving?

The total number of children served is unknown, but that information can be made available to the Task Force.

Do the wrap-around programs offer comprehensive services, such as mental health?

At this point it is mainly educational, but programs are looking to develop partners in the community to offer other types of family services.

Is SEIU interested in unionizing the private child care workforce?

No, not here in Maryland. Perhaps in other places, but in Maryland, it has strictly been an interest to unionize family child care providers, not center-based providers.

What curriculum is being used in both of these programs?

Both programs are following state standards, but the particular curriculum is not known.

Who are the mentors who work with the family child care providers?

Mentors are qualified teachers in the school system.

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

Ms. Gee testified on behalf of the MAEYC, an organization of over 1,400 early childhood professionals throughout the State. She addressed each of the items under discussion. As far as determining performance indicators of quality programs, Ms. Gee recommended that the State collect more data on exactly where kindergarteners are coming from to see which types of programs are producing the best outcomes for children. The form currently used for kindergarten enrollment does not provide information on each individual child's specific preschool experience; this information would be helpful in determining quality indicators.

MAEYC recommends that the State give priority to NAEYC accreditation among the various forms of accreditation as the new accreditation system has higher standards that are linked to research and positive outcomes for children. NAEYC is the gold standard. Only programs that have demonstrated a history of high performance should be considered, not programs that are still in the application process for accreditation. To expand the number of accredited programs, Ms. Gee recommended increasing funding

for Judy Hoyer accreditation enhancement grants, Office of Credentialing accreditation fee support, and referral network technical assistance and mentoring activities.

The Infant-Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS), Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), and Family Day Care Environmental Rating Scale (FDCERS) are recommended as environmental quality assessment instruments. Natural assessments, such as Work Sampling System, are also recommended. This type of assessment is used in kindergarten and, therefore, allows for vertical alignment.

Ms. Gee strongly recommended providing equivalent pay for teachers in child care settings as well as public schools. Without equal salaries across settings, highly qualified teachers in child care will move into the public schools to receive higher pay and benefits. In order for child care providers without a college education to work towards their degree, there needs to be a flexible articulation process that awards college credit to the relevant core of knowledge training already received. There also needs to be greater articulation between 2-year and 4-year schools, so that providers are not repeating the same core courses for their teacher certification. Early childhood teacher education programs in 4-year institutions need to develop evening, weekend, and/or online programs to meet the needs of full-time working teacher; otherwise, under the current system, teachers would need to quit their jobs to enroll in school full-time.

There should be some provision for substitute teachers to cover the time when a provider is being tutored or mentored. The current application process for MHEC scholarships is too cumbersome to providers; more clear information on opportunities for providers to increase their professional development is needed.

Ms. Gee recommended increasing funding for credential bonuses as well as creating a web-based application process for credentials. Data on a provider's credential and tiered reimbursement status should be made available to parents and used as a primary criterion of assessing child care program quality.

Currently, very few teachers actually receive training and technical assistance on the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR), and those that do need additional assistance after training to use data for planning. Much more money is needed to provide MMSR training to all teachers. Additionally, more attention should be given to transitional programs between child care/pre-k and kindergarten that involve parents, children, child care providers, and kindergarten teachers.

Ms. Gee mentioned Judy Centers as a great model of state and local coordination and should be implemented on a larger scale. An alternative would be for counties to provide an array of services modeled on Head Start for all children in public pre-k who have a need for them.

Along with the Task Force recommendations for the Governor, Ms. Gee recommended that the state government commission an economic development study to measure the public acceptance of a universal preschool program. Examples of motivating and

promoting the value of participation in such a program include: a series of op-ed columns, appearances on talk shows, and media events to educate the community about the importance of early learning experiences. Efforts should be made to re-educate State and county governments and the General Assembly about the importance of high quality early education programs and the return on early investments. Lastly, one important recommendation for the Task Force to make would be an external evaluation of the program for several years after implementation.

Questions:

How many centers in Maryland are accredited by NAEYC?

About 158 programs.

Rena Rotenberg, Instructor, Villa Julie College

Ms. Rotenberg testified to her experience teaching students in the early childhood teacher certification program at Villa Julie College. She spoke to quality indicators of an early childhood classroom. Some comments included:

- Teachers must provide hands on experiences for children throughout the day.
- Children are active learners and content needs to be reinforced over and over.
- The arrangement of the classroom is important; a good arrangement of furniture and materials offers children multiple opportunities to explore, discover, and grow.
- Daily routines and schedules are important as children need to have a sense of order and structure, so that they know what is expected of them. “Room Arrangements,” a video by Teaching Strategies is a good instructional video for student teachers.
- Nutrition, health, and physical activity affect learning.
- Stability in the classroom and secure relationships with teachers are essential to learning.
- Developmentally appropriate activities in math, language, music, and social studies are important as well as the development of social-emotional skills and conflict resolution.

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

Ms. Enright discussed different ways of defining and identifying quality. Process quality measures what actually happens in the classroom, such as interactions between children and teachers, whereas structural quality includes the physical classroom space, teacher compensation, teacher-child ratio, and class size. Other quality indicators include national accreditation, Core of Knowledge training, Maryland Child Care Credential level, POC tiered reimbursement level, number of providers with a Child Development Associate’s (CDA) or higher degree, number of providers enrolled in college courses, and having a track record of high readiness scores.

Ms. Enright identified two quality assessment instruments that are currently in place and are working successfully: the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR), which uses the Work Sampling System (WSS) that covers seven content domains and is appropriate for children three years of age through third grade, and the OUNCE Scale, which is used for infants and toddlers up to 42 months of age and is an ongoing, observational assessment of naturally occurring behaviors in a familiar environment. The OUNCE transitions nicely to the MMSR allowing for a continuity of assessment.

The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) offers accreditation to family child care providers that have a stable, high quality child care program. While accreditation should be required of participating providers, we need to take the fear out of process of accreditation. The State should implement apprenticeship programs similar to student teaching that would provide assistance to providers seeking accreditation as well as expand grant opportunities to support the costs of accreditation. There should also be credentialing incentives to encourage providers to seek higher education for program participation. Other recommended incentives include:

- Renewal bonuses in the Maryland Child Care Credential
- Higher pay scale for accredited providers or for those providers who have higher education levels as in the tiered reimbursement system
- Free conference registration at both the State Child Care conferences as well as NAFCC and NAEYC Conferences
- Core of Knowledge training linked to college credit; MMSR training costs more and requires more work than college course but does not count for college credit
- Awards for providers who renew their accreditation
- Implement the TEACH (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) program
- Increased funding for education and training with emphasis on Core of Knowledge
- Substitute pool so providers have flexibility to attend meetings or day trainings
- Healthcare/Retirement programs
- Membership in the teacher's credit union
- Teacher identification cards so providers can have access to discounts at supply stores

Suggested guidelines for program improvement included addressing the obstacles involved in implementing the MMSR and OUNCE. The expense and amount of materials required, and lack of continued training on the use of the materials, makes implementation unfeasible. Continued training, follow-up mentoring and technical assistance to providers in-home on the proper use of the assessment tools are needed. Providers will be accountable to MSDE; therefore, there should be support for accountability in the form of materials and training. Certified programs should receive yearly observations through the Family Day Care Environmental Rating Scale (FDECERS), bi-annual visits from certified MSDE staff to assist providers with their observations and program improvement goals, and additional training to support providers in their ability to observe children and to adapt their curriculum accordingly.

Ms. Enright emphasized that family child care is education not social service, and that we need to change the mindset of those in the education field towards family child care. The State needs to allow providers to work more closely with public school teachers to prepare children for school. It is easier to start from the top down through a step process: start with Superintendent of MSDE to District Superintendents, trickle down to the principals, then to teachers, lastly to providers and parents.

It is important to involve parents in the learning process. Parents have the responsibility to ensure that their children are enrolled in high quality programs, but also to encourage their learning through activities at home. Businesses do not see the positive impacts of investing in children birth to five; they focus more on older children and higher education. Ms. Enright stated that providers need to be more proactive in the community to show the importance of teaching children now instead of trying to save them later.

Ms. Enright concluded by stating that family child care can bring many things to the universal preschool program, such as continuity of care, parental choice and involvement, small group size, multi-age groups, and a whole child perspective. Additionally, including family child care in the universal preschool system can alleviate the current facilities crisis that we have in our schools.

Questions:

Would family child care providers support a hub system?

Yes, a community hub system would decrease isolation and allow providers to interact with other teachers. However, we would need to provide transportation for providers and children to go to the center hub.

At the conclusion of the presentations, Dr. Grafwallner pointed out a few additional documents in the folders of the Task Force members. One was a summary report from a national summit that Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, convened several weeks ago entitled: *The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the Gap between What We Know and What We Do*. The second item was a document on Comprehensive Preschool Curricula for State-Recommended Use in Nonpublic Preschool Programs for 3, 4 and 5 Year-Olds. The curricula were identified by an evaluation committee of experts in the field and were judged to be in alignment with the MMSR/Voluntary State Curriculum. The list will be released during an official launch on June 18, 2007. The third item was an empirical article from the March/April 2007 issue of *Child Development* entitled “Teacher’s Education, Classroom Quality, and Young Children’s Academic Skills: Results from Seven Studies of Preschool Programs.” Dr. Grafwallner explained that this particular article is central to the question as to whether the Task Force will recommend that all public preschool teachers be highly qualified or have other kinds of credentials.

Next, Dr. Grafwallner introduced Dr. Daraius Irani from Towson University who, with the assistance and funding from Pre-K Now, conducted a feasibility study looking at the economic benefits of a universal preschool program in the State of Maryland.

Dr. Daraius Irani, RESI Research and Consulting

As an economist, and not an early childhood educator and advocate, Dr. Irani examined this issue from a pre-workforce development approach. He explained that the economic growth in the future is dependent on today's children. There is a vast literature on economic benefits of preschool education, such as the Chicago Longitudinal Study of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers (1999) and the RAND study by Lynn Karoly and James Bigelow addressed in their paper "The Economics of Investing in Universal Preschool Education in California" (2005).

The methodology Dr. Irani conducted examined two different types of programs: a one-year program for all four-year-olds (projected enrollment is 45,443 in 2007, 80% of current kindergarten enrollment) and a two-year program for all three- and four-year-olds (projected enrollment is 102,144 in 2007 and 103,365 in 2008, 70% of all eligible children). The program would run for 525 hours per year (3 hours a day for 175 days per year). The child-staff ratio would be 10:1. For every 120 children, the program would need: three lead teachers; four assistant teachers; substitute teachers for 720 hours; 0.15 full-time equivalent of a director, accountant, education specialist, and enrollment specialist; and 2 daily sessions in 3 classrooms with 20 children in each classroom. The analyses accounted for employee benefit costs and non-personnel costs.

The total cost per child in 2007 dollars for a one-year program for four-year-olds would be \$5,054, for a total of \$229,690,498. The total costs net of current spending on federal, state, and local levels would be \$114,666,751, at a rate of \$2,523 per child. For a two-year program for all three- and four-year-olds, the cost would be \$5,054, for a total of \$516,279,532. Net of current spending, the cost per child would be \$3,928.

The impacts per child include:

- 15.4% reduction in grade repetition
- 0.7 years less time in special education
- 5.3% decrease in child welfare system costs
- 5.3% decrease in tangible costs to child abuse victims
- 5.3% decrease in intangible costs to child abuse victims
- 0.33 less petitions to the juvenile justice system
- 0.33 less petitions for tangible and intangible costs to juvenile crime victims
- 0.26 less petitions to the adult justice system
- 0.26 less petitions for tangible and intangible costs to victims of adult crimes
- 525 hours more in child care (\$3.44 per hour per child)
- 0.33 year increase in higher education attainment
- 11.2% increase in receiving a college education
- Increased labor force participation

Dr. Irani discussed that 21% of children enrolled in the program would not have gone to any preschool, 47% would have attended another public program, and 32% would have gone to a private preschool. The benefits children would also depend on the risk

characteristics (high, medium, and low) of the population. Of the children in Maryland, 28% are high-risk children, 49% medium-risk, and 23% low-risk. When adjusting for preschool attendance and for income distribution, for a one-year program, children in high risk populations would receive 100% of the benefits if they did not otherwise enroll in another preschool (50% if they had enrolled in preschool), children in medium risk populations would receive 50% of the benefits if they did not otherwise go to preschool (25% if they had enrolled in another preschool), and children in low risk populations would receive 25% of the benefits if they did not otherwise go to preschool (0% if they did enroll in preschool). For a two-year program, the benefits rise for children who would not have otherwise been enrolled in preschool: 100% benefits for high-risk children, 85% benefits for medium-risk children, and 70% risks for low-risk children.

For a two-year program, total federal, state, and local offsetting budget benefits would exceed costs after 16 years, Maryland state and local offsetting budget benefits would exceed costs in 23 years, and by the year 2050, the total net budgetary surplus would be \$2.542 billion with a Maryland state and local net budgetary surplus of \$1.238 billion. In 2050, every dollar spent on the program would return \$2.70 in budget savings, \$1.83 of which would go to Maryland tax payers. Increased compensation for participants in the program and their guardians would be \$4.322 billion. Savings to individuals from reduced crime would be \$1.95 billion. The program will generate: \$30,725 total benefits per child, \$24,361 of which will go to Maryland society as a whole. There will be 4.02 benefit-cost ratio of the U.S. Society as a whole; 3.19 benefit-cost ratio for Maryland.

For a one-year program, total federal, state, and local offsetting budget benefits would exceed costs after 9 years, Maryland state and local offsetting budget benefits would exceed costs in 13 years, and by the year 2050, the total net budgetary surplus would be \$846 million with a Maryland state and local net budgetary surplus of \$486 million. In 2050, every dollar spent on the program would return \$4.16 in budget savings, \$2.81 of which would go to Maryland taxpayers. Increased compensation for participants in the program and their guardians would be \$1.192 billion. Savings to individuals from reduced crime would be \$548 million. The program will generate: \$18,158 total benefits per child, \$14,833 of which will go to Maryland society as a whole. There will be a 7.2 benefit-cost ratio of the U.S. Society as a whole; a 5.9 benefit-cost ratio for Maryland.

A second part of the feasibility study included a qualitative analysis to explore the viewpoints of the stakeholders in the profession who will be directly impacted by the voluntary preschool program. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five professionals (i.e., center directors, principal) from a variety of preschool settings in the state of Maryland, including half-day and full-day programs, Head Start, private for profit, and not for profit.

Questions were asked about funding sources at each site. For each center, the bulk of the financial support came from tuitions from the three- and four-year-old classrooms. Infant and toddler rooms are much more expensive to operate because of low teacher-child ratios that are required for licensing. If all the three- and four-year-olds left child care

centers and attended public pre-k in the public schools, center directors said they could not afford to operate and would have to shut down.

Two centers were NAEYC accredited, but were concerned about meeting new standards for teacher qualification for reaccreditation. One center had MSDE accreditation, but did not intend on seeking NAEYC accreditation due to the expense and rigorous new standards. The fourth center was not accredited by NAEYC or MSDE due to financial commitment and teacher turnover.

All full-time staff had at least a CDA. Very few teachers in the participating centers had a bachelor's degree, with the exception of the highly qualified teacher in a public school pre-k classroom and the Head Start teacher who met Head Start credentials. Several have 4-year degrees, but not certification in early childhood education. Directors stated that staff who receive higher education leave for better paying jobs; centers do not have the money to pay for degrees or keep highly educated teachers. Staff have indicated feeling intimidated about having to go to college. All respondents agreed that it is the State's responsibility to provide these programs, and that the State should monitor credentialing for teachers, but that programs should be center-based.

Dr. Irani recommended collaboration between public and private sites; center-based programs cannot operate without the money they received for their four-year-olds. He also suggested the consideration of an alternative licensing structure, as the current MSDE certification may not be appropriate for those working with infants and toddlers, and teacher education programs tend to focus on school-aged children. A Birth to Five Certification (e.g., North Carolina) may address this licensure gap. Towson University's Department of Early Childhood Education is willing to pilot such a Birth to Five certification program.

Questions:

Is there a large difference in the benefits of a two-year program over a one-year program?

The one year program had higher benefits. Maybe the State could start with a program only for four-year-olds and phase in a program for three-year olds over time.

Do you consider the benefit of women entering the workforce in your analyses?

Yes, in the part of the benefits of child care.

The study is focused on costs of implementing the program, but not creating classrooms, correct?

Correct, we did not consider the costs of constructing additional classroom space or materials, but using the current available facilities.

Did you look at the costs of comprehensive services?

No, we left out comprehensive services such as home visits. We only considered the costs of specialists.

The analyses were based on the assumptions that there would be public-private partnerships in which children are in different settings and teachers are certified. It is a “scaled up” version of the existing half-day pre-k program in the public schools.

What about costs for programs such as ESOL, special education, and family support services?

That can be included in the final report.

Do you feel these types of cost-benefit analyses have a positive influence on policymakers?

Yes, these numbers are convincing evidence for politicians.

Have other states used studies to get funding?

Pre-K Now would have this information. Both Georgia and Oklahoma have done cost-benefit analyses of their preschool programs.

Were transportation costs included?

No, the analyses did not include transportation costs.

Would having pre-k in the public schools allow for more space for infants and toddlers in centers?

No, this would make care extremely expensive for parents. Three- and four-year-olds are subsidizing care for infants and toddlers. Low teacher-child ratios in infant programs require higher costs. Centers cannot function without the monies from threes and fours.

Lunch

Deliberations

Dr. Grafwallner walked through the MSDE website that contains information on several of the issues that were brought up during the public testimonies. The Maryland Model for School Readiness has already been developed and contains standards for pre-kindergarten that align with the kindergarten curriculum. It contains standards, indicators, and objectives identical to the Voluntary State Curriculum for each content area including: mathematics, science, language and literacy development, fine arts, physical development, and health education. The MMSR has a portfolio-based assessment instrument which is a modified Work Sampling System that addresses each indicator on a three-point rating scale (proficient, in process, and needs development). Children are assessed in the fall to measure growth throughout the school year. In special education, children are assessed with additional indicators. MSDE also has an established early childhood accreditation system to identify high quality early childhood programs. National accreditation (e.g., NAEYC) is also recognized by MSDE. The consensus among the speakers was that the MMSR/Voluntary State Curriculum, the modified portfolio-based assessment system, as well as state and national accreditation are positive and should be continued.

The Task Force then deliberated on each item on the agenda individually and voted on their recommendations.

Item #2: Develop plans to identify resources needed to improve the quality and services of early childhood learning programs by:

(i) Determining performance indicators of quality programs:

- Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) and Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) guidelines
- Guidelines for Healthy Child Development and Care for Young Children Birth to Three
- State Preschool Curriculum Project identifying a list of state-recommended, comprehensive, research-based curricula. Three pathways are offered; programs can select from the approved list, follow the local school system curriculum, or submit a different curriculum being used to an in-house review committee to demonstrate its effectiveness and alignment with the MMSR and VSC
- Accreditation of programs

Motion 1. Vote taken and Task Force members agreed that current state and national accreditation systems would be accepted.

- Family child care must have the national family child care standards (NFCCA); there are no state standards.
- Center based programs can choose to have state or national accreditation or both. Accreditation bodies include: MSDE, NAEYC, Middle States, National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA), American Montessori Society (AMS), and Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).
 - NAEYC accreditation allows a different teacher qualification (BA) than does NFCCA (CDA); therefore, a family child care center could meet all accreditation requirements but still not meet teacher qualifications. It was discussed that accreditation standards and state teacher qualification standards would be considered two separate issues and programs would have to meet both sets of standards.
 - Programs in public school systems are required to meet COMAR (Code of Maryland Regulations) pre-kindergarten standards and, thus, are already validated.

Motion 2. Provisional accreditation by classroom, if 4-year-old classroom meets accreditation standards, with a sunset date by which the phase-in period would end. All agree.

- According to current policy, the entire center must be accredited, not specific classrooms. There is a concern that centers will have difficulty meeting standards for the whole center when they only need accreditation for their preschool classroom(s); whereas, if accreditation is done at a classroom level, more programs can be accredited. The funding will only

be going to the pre-k classroom; therefore, perhaps the accreditation should only be required of that classroom.

- There was concern that classroom accreditation would limit the flexibility of the program (e.g., substitute teacher not credentialed to teach preschool). It was discussed that it should be a program goal to achieve accreditation for the entire center, and the State should not allow programs to settle on accrediting one classroom. A time frame could be allotted during which a program could achieve accreditation (e.g., 1 or 2 year period). If the teacher leaves, as part of contract the center would be required to replace that teacher.
- It was decided that, as an alternative, instead of deferring a program that did not reach full accreditation standards as a center, the individual pre-kindergarten classroom can be accredited if the classroom met specific classroom standards. The Task Force will recommend increasing funding for incentives to raise the number of programs with accreditation that can then enter the universal pre-kindergarten system. The funding will allow a center to establish a public pre-kindergarten program, and allot them a period of time to achieve full accreditation. There will also be a specified cut-off date by which all programs must be accredited.

(ii) Identifying and recommending quality assessment instruments for the purpose of addressing early learning needs in children:

- There was a recommendation during the public hearing that data be collected on children before they enter pre-k to assess what programs, if any, they came from and what types of centers they were attending (e.g., family child care; private child care center).
- The modified Work Sampling System works well in the current system and is aligned with the Voluntary State Curriculum standards. A uniform method of gathering data across all sites would allow for comparison analyses, which could be published in an annual state report. Scores would not be compatible if different assessments were used. Programs would be held accountable for the universal preschool dollars and would be required to report out data in fall and spring. This would not negate other data collection/assessment tools that programs are using. The same assessment for three, four, and five year-olds would allow for a reliable database to look at data over time and assess the effectiveness of the new program.

VOTE: Recommendation to require participating programs to use the modified Work Sampling System, which is aligned with the current kindergarten assessment. All in agreement.

(iii) Identifying strategies to expand the number of programs meeting national or State standards of quality through program accreditation:

- Accreditation will be required which would expand standards for quality.

- (iv) *Proposing incentives and rewards programs designed to increase overall program quality:*
- Increased funding for incentives will encourage program accreditation and enhance program quality.
 - Teachers in the Maryland credentialing program will be given bonuses when they increase their credentials. The State will analyze those bonuses so that teachers can expect to receive them each year.
- (v) *Using program improvement guidelines developed by the Maryland State Department of Education for preschool and early childhood education, which include::*
- Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) and Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) guidelines
 - Guidelines for Healthy Child Development and Care of Young Children Birth to Three
 - State Preschool Curriculum Project
- (vi) *Identifying and promoting State and local coordination:*
- Different counties have different needs and capacity of programs. Some may have space in schools; others may need to establish more school-community partnerships. If funding flows through school system, there might be an issue of implementing universal pre-k in center-based programs.
 - All facilities should be in excellent condition. When necessary, relocatables should be used for special programs (art, music) and for older children, while young children remain in the main school building.
 - There are center-based and family child care programs that have under-utilized space. There will be lower transportation costs by using center based programs that have wrap-around programs.
 - Child care programs run year-round, but a pre-kindergarten program that runs on the public school schedule will not be available over the summer. There could be a summer program for 4-year-olds in addition to the 10-month school year. There could also be additional wrap-around programs (early morning and afternoon care) at the public schools provided by a private child care company.
 - Experts recommended a full-day (6-7 hours/day) program to achieve effectiveness and provide care to children of working parents. (Should there be a full-day program eventually but recommend a half-day program during the phase-in of the program?)
 - It was suggested that the Task Force recommend a 3-hour, educational pre-k component with standards (e.g., curriculum; certified teacher) with wrap-around child care services for working parents, as in Judy Centers. Parents can choose the setting: public school, family child care, or private center.

End of deliberations. Time ran out before Items 4 and 6 could be addressed. The deliberations will continue on these topics during the next and final meeting.

Additionally, at that time, the Task Force will write their recommendations. The Consortium on Early Childhood Education Faculty has information on teacher qualifications, which is included on a handout in the Task Force members' folders and will be presented at the next meeting.

Heather See, staff to the Task Force, has been contracted to write the final report for the Task Force, which will be due in draft format in October- early November. At that point, a final draft of Dr. Irani's cost-benefit analysis study will be ready for viewing. During a future discussion on ways and means, the Task Force will need to address the alignment of the program to the calculations Dr. Irani is offering.

Next meeting will be on September 27, 2007 at the Maryland State Department of Education in Baltimore.