
R00A99

MSDE Early Childhood Development

Maryland State Department of Education

Response to the Analyst's Review and Recommendations

House Education & Economic Development Subcommittee –
January 30, 2019

Senate Education, Business & Administration Subcommittee –
January 31, 2019



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The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) welcomes this opportunity to share with the Committee some of its success stories and to address questions raised by the analyst.

Publicly Funded Prekindergarten

MSDE should comment on its outreach efforts to increase enrollment in publicly funded prekindergarten and whether it collaborates with Department of Human Services (DHS) or the Maryland Department of Health in any other ways to connect eligible families with programs.

Each year, MSDE provides local departments of social services and local health departments with jurisdiction-specific flyers that list the publicly funded PreK programs available for qualifying families. These PreK programs are also posted on our Child Care Resource Network Locate website: <http://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/programs-services/locate/>.

MSDE Division of Early Childhood Staff assist with the recruitment of income eligible four-year-olds to participate in programs funded with the PreK Expansion Grants program by coordinating with the Child Care Subsidy Program. Letters are sent to families in the subsidy program. The PreK Expansion Grant staff maintains a list of families for follow up and provides any additional enrollment assistance as necessary.

PreK Expansion Grant Monitors are in close and frequent contact with assigned sub-grantees providing technical assistance regarding recruitment and enrollment to help them ensure that all available slots are filled.

Ready for Kindergarten

MSDE should explain the steps being taken to improve Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) administration and scores among these subgroups of students.

The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) is a rigorous assessment that supports the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.

MSDE supports every school district with a Ready for Kindergarten grant that includes funding for the KRA administration and professional learning for addressing gaps in learning and in student group results as evidenced from the KRA data.

School districts use grant funding for working with child care and Head Start programs in sharing analysis of the KRA data and providing professional learning.

MSDE supports child care and Head Start programs with the implementation of the Early Learning Assessment (ELA), an assessment aligned with Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. This includes providing a list of qualified trainers, ELA kits, teacher survey, presentations at child care conferences, and visits to selected programs for feedback and support.

Administrators and teachers have access to KRA reports on an online system that disaggregates student data to inform instruction and professional learning.

Each year, MSDE works with Ready at Five to publish and disseminate *Readiness Matters*, which highlights the subgroup achievement gaps.

This year, from March to May, MSDE will lead eight Regional Town Halls on building a birth through five early childhood system; the sessions will include a discussion on the results of the KRA and strategies to address subgroup achievement gaps, similar to last year's events.

Child Care Development Fund

MSDE should provide an update on how much of the unused federal funds from prior fiscal years have been spent since the close of fiscal 2018 and how much fund balance is expected to be available at the close of fiscal 2019.

For the State Fiscal Year 2018, the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) carryover balance was \$11.2 million for Child Care Subsidy support and non-direct services. The full amount of carryover funding was expended by September 30, 2018. The MSDE has reprioritized fiscal 2019 spending allotments to fulfill the federal mandate that 70% of the federal authorization, equating to \$78 million, is directly expended on Child Care Subsidy support. Based on current spending plans, the carryover balance for the State Fiscal Year 2019 is expected to be \$9.7 million. The carryover balance will represent the remaining allocation for non-direct services.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Program

Due to recent changes to the CCS program, specifically lifting enrollment freezes, expanding income eligibility, and increasing provider reimbursement rates, CCS expenditures are expected to increase. Although some carryover federal funds and additional Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds are available, general fund expenditures are expected to increase in future years. The Department of Legislative Services recommends committee narrative requesting that MSDE submit quarterly reports on CCS expenditures.

MSDE response: MSDE concurs.