Montgomery County Universal Preschool Implementation Work Group
February 5, 2009
6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Council Office Building, 6th Floor Conference Room
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

MINUTES

Members present:
Janine Bacquie
Kate Garvey
Traci McLemore
Julie Bader
Mary Lang
Jane Seffel
John Surr
Rolf Grafwallner
Gene Counihan
Brad Stewart

Members not present
Jose Alvarez
Clara Floyd
Jackie Lichter
Jennifer Devine
Khadra Ayorinde

Start Time: 6:05 p.m.

Make Up Testimony and Questions:

Mara Bier- Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning gave testimony to the group as follow up testimony from the Public Forum (her written testimony is attached).

Questions from the work group:

- What is the potential problem with the work or recommendations that have been discussed?
  - teachers have left (higher pay) and children have left (free preschool)
  - Some states have offered professional development at reduced rates, parents can choose to use UPK at a synagogue.

- How is the curriculum requirement met?
  - All schools under the organization use an approved curriculum and additional curriculums are provided along side the approved curriculum. Some schools have submitted their own curriculum. All schools are licensed.

The Work Group reviewed the Universal Preschool Implementation Work Group Child Care Provider Educational Needs Assessment Survey prepared by the Montgomery County Resource and Referral Center (R&R) Staff. Comments and suggests are requested from the group.

- This survey seeks to identify the demographics and characteristics of the work force of the early childhood providers in Montgomery County.
- This survey will be distributed through the email list of the R&R that includes a few hundred members. Work Group members should alert their organizations of the survey
- This survey will be distributed next week (week of February 9).
- Please have comments back to Vivian by Thursday of next week (Feb. 12th).
- The cut off date of the survey is by the end of February.

Parent Feedback Survey- will be live on SurveyMonkey.com by the end of the week. The email link will be distributed to the group to have it sent out to the group.

The group reviewed HOUSE BILL 184 that requires the Maryland State Department of Education to consult with local jurisdictions before finalizing the State's Preschool for All Business Plan. The Business Plan must be complete by December 2009.
Hearing regarding the bill: 2/17-house hearing; 2/18- senate hearing
Maryland Committee for Children supports this bill and there are no negative comments regarding the bill. The Work Group supports this bill.

The Work Group discussed the following outstanding issues:

<u>Program scheduling</u>
Half day vs. Full day- The Work Group discussed whether to support a half day program or a full day program. The Work Group supports first focusing locations where the demographics indicate the highest need areas as defined by Poverty (FARMS); English Language Learners (ELL); Special education; Mobility. Parent choice meaning what is the

parent's need or the parent's desire for the length of the program should also be a consideration as to the length of the program.

Some Work Group members suggested a strategic approach to expand some half day programs and target some full day programs in the high needs areas. Use of a two tiered approach would prevent unintended consequences.

Full day is defined as six (6) or more hours according to parents' need.

- Suggestions to determine where to expand half day to full day:
    - expand in the highest need areas to full day
    - need is defined as the financial need and the absence of other resources
    - ELL, financial; child care in the community; FARMS rate
    - Use geographical analysis for school readiness; where children are most <u>not</u> ready are where the preschool programs should be expanded.
        - MCPS does not have this broken down by region or cluster; it may not come in this form
        - The Work Group requests information from the state to determine which areas in the county have the highest number of children not ready for kindergarten.
        - LAP group did address the geographical issue and focused on ELL and low income children, as well as children not exposed to any formal care before entering kindergarten
        - Use the maps already given in the previous meeting to determine the regions of most need.

HIGHEST NEED means:

- FARMS
- ELL
- Special Education/Special Needs
- Poverty
- Mobility

Additional criteria to determine where to put programs are:

- Availability of programs/Number of programs offered in the area
- Space available for the programs to exist in the highly impacted communities
    - Recreation Centers are underutilized during the day. Space may be available in the recreation centers.

Full day preschool is being offered to most children in PG County. This is causing many child care centers to go out of business due to low enrollment. A partnership model will help to avoid this from occurring in Montgomery County.

Parental Choice-survey parental needs

- Where would public funds go to support children's education and families needs for child care?
- What are the factors to determine where to add new full day slots?
    - There is a need for unstructured playtime and naps. Some Work Group member would support a full day program if there was a full day that was not focused on unstructured play.

Other Considerations for the Work Group are:

- How is the program going to be rolled out, by income or by residence?
- What is the gain of half day to full day? There are benefits for both and the benefits for full day are worth the costs. What is the data that shows the difference between half day to full day. There is more bang for the buck with low income children than wealthier children when those children attend full day programs.
- The half day vs. full day depends on the support programs. Half day works well in a structured environment but washes out if the wrap around care is unstructured and loose. Full day has strong gains for the most disadvantaged groups. It does not have such a strong impact on upper income children.
- The state has established the program eligibility on income based.

Full Year v. School Year-
Those with the most severe need should get full year/full day service.

Questions posed the Work Group are:
- Where should we partner to help the most number of children?
- How is the program roll out going to be prioritized?
- Should kids who do not make the cut of public preschool and are placed on the waitlist, be the first served by the Preschool for All preschool program?

The Work Group will use demographic geo-mapping to target areas for the first Preschool For All site as opposed to doing a whole county income analysis.

40% of the current participants in current pre-kindergarten program across the state do not meet the current pre-kindergarten guidelines. There are also many children on the waiting list and if these children are categorized to fit into the highest needs category, the wait list should be the first priority to move children into the preschool program.

The group will revisit this issue of full day vs. half day and full year vs. school year. We will send out a proposal with the attached demographic maps that was used during an earlier meeting.

Additional Questions raised by Work Group members:

- How does the staff work for 12 months if most programs run a school year?
- How will the state change the perception of what is "school" in the eyes of the public to encourage parents to send children to private preschool programs?

Clarification of Issues (presented by Rolf Grafwallner):

- Faith Based Programs (eligibility)- looking for models that are already in place; the issue comes to exempted programs that have no oversight and the state does not require them to comply with the regulatory requirements. If the faith based program will go through the process of the becoming eligible, it will be eligible. There could be a block in the day where the preschool is taught. They are not excluded automatically.
- Class size- 20 students for 4; 16 for threes.
- Local Review Panel- funding issue- proposed software that identifies maintenance of effort and tuition that serve as the anchors to determine the costs of the program. Membership to the panel is left up the individual jurisdiction.
- Oversight of the providers selected is with the state.
- Salaries for teachers in future years- a teacher's salary will increase but it is unlikely to keep pace with the increase of public school salaries.

Additional discussion centered on:

Family Child Care Network-

1. All providers should have the same qualifications as those in center based programs. The presumption is not that that family child care will be certified teacher. A teacher could come into the home to instruct the children even if the family child care provider is not a licensed teacher. The family child care provider must be NAFCC accredited.
2. An individual child care provider can not apply but must apply as a network. The organization that runs the network is responsible for providing the support structure and the curriculum.
3. The state will establish a model for family child care networks.
4. The support organization will oversee the enrollment and ensure that each provider has the capacity to maintain the program.

The Work Group has asked for more information on family child care networks. There would be a different quality enhancement costs even though the base costs would be the same.

Additional Question:

- Is the family child care provider going to be directly compensated?

Adjourned at 8:27 p.m.