



Maryland's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Project 1 Summary: Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils

State (and Local Level) Governance Structure (pp.74-79)

Create a system of local early childhood advisory councils across all 24 local jurisdictions.

By December 31, 2012 all local jurisdictions will have active early childhood advisory councils with a membership that to the extent possible mirrors the Governor's State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (State Advisory Council) and includes relevant local early childhood stakeholders. .

Annual benchmarks:

By December 31, 2012, all local jurisdictions will have an active early childhood advisory council, chaired by the local school superintendent or the County Executive with membership reflecting that of the State Advisory Council.

Background:

- Since 2002, included in Maryland's early childhood infrastructure, is an interagency workgroup whose mission was to initiate and oversee implementation of an early childhood state strategic plan, aimed at improving the early childhood system. The State Advisory Council, formerly the Maryland Leadership in Action Committee, advises the Governor on the work of the Council to achieve its goals and coordinates a comprehensive system of services for young children and their families.
- The current State Advisory Council includes representatives from all facets of early childhood in Maryland and is chaired by the State Superintendent of Schools. The formal Council meets quarterly, with active workgroups meeting more frequently as needed quarterly reports are submitted to the federal government on progress toward the state's early childhood goals. Recently, the Council was instrumental in developing Maryland's Early Learning Challenge Grant proposal.
- The three goals of the Council's strategic plan to improve school readiness for all children in Maryland are: 1-All children have access to high quality early learning and development programs, 2-Families have access to resources needed to be effective as their child's first teacher, 3-Children arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies.



ELC Strategies:

- The goal of the local early childhood advisory councils is to create an infrastructure to ensure collaboration and coordination at the local level to oversee the initiatives and reforms of the state's early childhood strategic plan, including the projects within the Early Learning Challenge Grant proposal. Each local advisory council will report local progress to the State Advisory Council.
- The local advisory council membership would include the local Superintendent of Schools, local government representative(s), representatives of local education agencies' early childhood general and special education, Infants & Toddlers, Head Start, family and center-based child care programs, the child care resource and referral agencies, the Judy Center Partnerships, local libraries, family support centers, family involvement providers, local departments of social services, child care licensing, early childhood non-profit agencies, and partners customized to the resources in that local jurisdiction.

Responsibilities of Annie Casey Foundation:

- Provide leadership to the local early childhood advisory councils;
- Maintain regular contact with the chair of each local early childhood advisory council;
- Provide technical assistance in the formation of the councils, in concert with MSDE;
- Communicate regularly with MSDE and the State Advisory Council.

Responsibilities of Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils:

- Organize an early childhood advisory council whose membership and goals mirror the State Advisory Council, to the extent possible;
- Recruit members through invitation;
- Establish bylaws to govern its work based to include quarterly meetings and State Advisory Council guidelines ;
- Develop local public/private partnerships to identify additional local representatives to support the work of the local early childhood advisory council);
- Coordinate leadership activities in collaboration with the Annie Casey Foundation;
- Ensure local early childhood advisory council meeting minutes are provided and activities are reported quarterly to the State Advisory Council; and
- Ensure the local chair attend all functions organized by the State Advisory Council and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Responsibilities of the State Advisory Council:

- Develop, coordinate, and organize with the Annie E. Casey Foundation guidelines for each local jurisdiction to follow in developing their local early childhood advisory council membership and infrastructure;



- Approve the objectives of the function of each local early childhood council, based on State Advisory Council goals,
- Provide technical assistance, possibly in the form of bulletins, newsletters or presentations;
- Review local meeting minutes and other documentation;
- If a dispute occurs within one of the local early childhood advisory councils, the State Advisory Council will provide resolution using Council bylaws as the procedure by which disagreements are being discussed and resolved; and
- Host at least one annual meeting inviting the local council chair to further Maryland's Early Childhood Education and Care Strategic Plan and assure a coordinated comprehensive approach to building and supporting the necessary infrastructure.

Rationale:

- In order to achieve a comprehensive, coordinated early care and education system, it is imperative to have effective governance at both local and state levels. The State Advisory Council has provided this at the state level for over a decade. This project creates a comparable approach at the local level that is both inclusive of the state structure and coordinated within the local jurisdiction.