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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Jack R. Smith, Ph.D. *JRS/CLM*

DATE: October 27, 2015

SUBJECT: Early Childhood Development Update

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to provide follow-up information on several projects of Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant and the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA).

BACKGROUND:

On July 28, 2015, the Board received an update on two projects of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant. At that meeting, Board members requested additional information on the pediatricians’ engagement with early literacy and the status of the local early childhood advisory councils. The Board also requested an update on the 2015-16 administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA).

Reach Out and Read (ROAR)

MSDE and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) charged the Maryland Academy of Pediatrics to implement the national early literacy program, *Reach Out and Read* (ROAR). It is an evidence-based nonprofit program delivered by medical providers to promote early literacy and school readiness activities in pediatric exam rooms.

As of June 2015, the program has enrolled 88 pediatricians statewide and served more than 99,000 children, age 6 months to 5 years. The program is particularly effective with families who are eligible for Medicaid and who may not be exposed to early literacy initiatives in their communities. A large national evaluation of the program has shown that high-risk urban families participating in *Reach Out and Read* read more frequently to their children. Children exposed to *Reach Out and Read* had better outcomes in receptive and expressive language skills.

Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils (LECAC)

The local councils were established in 2013 and resemble the statutory State Early Childhood Advisory Council that advises MSDE on the implementation of the RTT-ELC and other early childhood initiatives overseen by MSDE and other agencies (e.g., Department of Health and Mental Hygiene). All 24 councils are chaired or co-chaired by representatives from the local school systems and joined by representatives from county governments, local agencies, non-profit organizations, and the local management boards. The function of the councils is to coordinate the services of its members for the sole purpose of boosting school readiness skills among incoming kindergarteners. The councils were

also instructed by MSDE to apply the Results-based Accountability (RBA) process in its work. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, a major promoter of the RBA process nationally, agreed to fund a 10-day academy for five selected members of the councils to understand the RBA process and improve their leadership skills. The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) results are used to benchmark each jurisdiction's annual goals in terms of overall results and the emerging achievement gaps. In 2013, the Councils applied for and received funds to coordinate critical improvements in the delivery of early childhood services.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)

Ready for Kindergarten (R4K): Maryland's Early Childhood Assessment System has two components: the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), which was administered for the first time in the fall of 2014 to all public school kindergarteners, and the Early Learning Assessment (ELA). The ELA measures the progress of learning in children, 36 to 72 months, along 32 learning progressions in seven domains. It is scheduled to be launched in early 2016 as a field test.

The KRA administration is in its second year. Based on valuable feedback from teachers and others after the implementation last year, MSDE made significant improvements to the tablet-based assessment which have led to a much smoother administration compared to last year. As the window of the KRA administration closes by November 1, local school systems appear to be better prepared in terms of coordinating the KRA with the administration of other assessments (See Attachment), data managements, as well as timely training and technical assistance for kindergarten teachers. Uploading statewide student identifiers occurred by the beginning of the assessment window on August 17. The KRA administration window will end November 1, 2015. Individual Student Reports (ISR) for the families of kindergarten students will be available by November 15. State, local, and school reports are scheduled to be released after the data verification process by the end of February 2016. After six weeks of administration, several technical issues arose which have been resolved quickly. MSDE plans to survey the teachers on their experience as it had done last year. The survey results will be included in a legislative report to the Governor and the General Assembly which is due by December 15, 2015.

SUMMARY:

Using RTT-ELC funding, MSDE has been engaged in implementing early literacy activities in partnership with the DHMH and the America Academy of Pediatrics. It also established 24 local early childhood advisory councils that received funds to implement activities designed to boost the school readiness skills of young children. Council members have been trained to apply the RBA process to improve the KRA results for incoming kindergarteners over the next few years. The KRA is being administered for the second time and the roll-out has been much smoother as a result of improvements and better coordination by local school systems.

ACTION:

For information only. No action required.

ATTACHMENT

Summary of Other K Assessments Given During KRA Window (Aug.15 – Nov. 1, 2015)

LEA	ELA-formative	ELA-other	Math-formative	Math-other	Social Foundations	Physical Well-Being
Allegany	ACPS Benchmarks		ACPS benchmarks			
Anne Arundel		Fountas and Pinnell				
Baltimore City		Amplify-Reading 3D	Interim Assessment			
Baltimore County						
Calvert		Pre-Reading Probe Quarterly Literacy Assessments		Math Numeracy Screening Tool		
Caroline						
Carroll		Unit Assessments Primary Literacy Assessment				
Cecil		Early Literacy-HM				
Charles						
Dorchester		DIBELS		DCPS Math Benchmarks		
Frederick	Running Record		Benchmark Exams and Interviews for KCCB4 and KMDB3			
Garrett						
Harford		Kindergarten Literacy Assessment Fountas and Pinnell		Student Numeracy Assessment Progressions		
Howard		Fountas and Pinnell				Fitness Gram

ATTACHMENT

LEA	ELA-formative	ELA-other	Math-formative	Math-other	Social Foundations	Physical Well-Being
Kent		DIBELS		Math Term Assessments		
Montgomery		MCPS Assessment Program for Primary Reading		Measures of Academic Progress for Primary		
Prince George's		K-2 Data Capture-DRA and other literacy assessments SLO Pretests and Posttests		SLO Pretests and Posttests		
Queen Anne's		Pre-Test STAR 360		STAR 360		
Somerset	Reading Pre-Test					
St. Mary's		DIBELS	Elementary Math Operations and Algebraic Thinking Assessments	Counting Profile		
Talbot	Foundational Skills Assessment	Elementary ELA Unit Assessments				Elementary Physical Ed. Unit Assessments
Washington		Fountas and Pinnell	Number Corner			
Wicomico	ELA Benchmark Assessment System					
Worcester						

Note: Shaded sections denote No Local Assessment