



**Maryland Family Engagement Coalition**  
**Monday, Aug. 20, 2018**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:** Paola Andujar, Schehenede Asler, Wendy Baysmore-Dantzler, William Dixon, Julie Dobies, Evelyn English, Ashley Fehringer, Tresa Hana, Loretta Hoepfner, Karina Hudack, Cyndi La Marca Lessner, Melanie Martin, Kia McLeod, Marjorie Miles, Chris Peusch, Lisa Rhodes, Karmen Rouland, Carrie Sanders, Dorothy Stoltz, Chris Swanson

- The 2018 Maryland Family Engagement Summit: Wendy Dantzler debriefed the members on the 2018 Maryland Family Engagement Summit.
  - An overview of the 2018 Maryland Family Engagement Summit can be found on the new family engagement community hub website, [marylandfamiliesengage.org](http://marylandfamiliesengage.org).
  - Go to the home page, scroll down to the news section and click on the tile featuring the Summit.
  - On the page, users will find a brief description, photos, the keynote biography, and the presentation handouts from this year's Summit.
  - Ready At Five is still gathering the survey results, which will be shared during the next meeting.
  - Overall, the committee received great response during the event.
- Kellogg Grant: Cyndi La Marca Lessner and Dorothy Stoltz provided updates on the Kellogg grant.
  - For the State Consortium, Maryland's model is being used to support other states with improving their family engagement practices and developing frameworks.
  - A part of the group's discussion included partnerships with libraries.
  - The group continues to highlight these partnerships because many times libraries encounter families first.
  - Libraries often reach families who are not enrolled in formal programs.
  - It's a great way for families to get to know what resources are available to them.
  - Once Maryland initiated this discussion, other states started reexamining their partnership providers, including libraries.

- The 2019 Family Engagement Summit: Cyndi La Marca Lessner asked Coalition members to brainstorm themes and ideas for the 2019 Family Engagement Summit.
  - The planning committee wants to distribute the “Save the Date” for the 2019 Family Engagement Summit much earlier than previous years.
  - The goal is to encourage more public school staff to attend the Summit.
  - The early childhood system is very much involved in family engagement; however, the committee needs to reach more public schools.

**Q:** Do we encourage them to register with their personal e-mails because public school staff is not working during the summer?

**A:** That’s a really good idea. It’s really difficult to get in contact with them during the summer.

**Q:** Are we still considering having the Summit during the summer months?

**A:** Yes. The summer seems to work well for us. We just want to get the information to them earlier so they can add this event to their calendars.

- In addition, the committee should start thinking about ideas or themes for the next Summit.
- For 2018, the committee focused on parent leaders.
- However, the committee encountered some challenges in terms of encouraging parents to participate.
- Last year, the committee had discussed Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health as a possible theme.
- One of the opportunities that the committee has for 2019 is that schools turned in their Suspension and Expulsion policy action plans in May 2018.
- The plans detail how they will address and meet the requirements.
- The legislation has been implemented for two years and the schools had a year to put forth an action plan, the committee can learn best practices and/or about any additional resources and supports needed. This would make a great conversation for the morning session.
- It will also help inform attendees of progress.
- This approach will help encourage more leaders to attend.

**Q:** Dorothy Stoltz asked if the proposal for the 2019 Family Engagement Summit includes Social Emotional Learning and equity as a potential theme for the conference, particularly during the morning session?

**A:** Cyndi La Marca Lessner said the reason the conversation included equity is because when working with families and trying to understand them, you have to understand what families’ needs are and how to address them. This will be really helpful for attendees.

**C:** Chris Swanson said that an added layer that puts this into context, especially the equity piece, is that we talk about Social Emotional Learning from the instructional side. He encouraged looking at it holistically and keeping that a part of the conversation, from health to economic disparities. This means including nutritionists, pediatricians, social services, and other representatives on a panel.

**C:** Cyndi La Marca Lessner said she likes that idea because we always talk about this from an educational point of view. This is not just education and it's not just the teacher's responsibility. It's the community's responsibility. We all have a responsibility.

**C:** Dorothy Stoltz said she has been reading about the "whole child" and the holistic approach. It's about health, providing a sense of safety, and challenging children to elevate their capacity to learn and grow. It's also about engaging each child in creative thinking and experimental learning, and then providing support to parents and other caring adults. Maybe this could be a workshop because it's all about the community. Schools, libraries, churches, families, and other organizations should all be involved.

**C:** Chris Swanson added that it would be great to include all of the organizations we represent in the morning session or a workshop. What are the resources that families and professional have available? So if you have a concern about your child, where can you find information at the library and how do you include your teachers in that conversation. We need to present it as an action item so that attendees can actually use these resources.

**C:** Cyndi La Marca Lessner said a lot of the conferences that we attend give you the what; but not the how. If we really want to move forward on a lot of these issues, we need to provide action steps on how to do it.

**C:** Evelyn English said there seems to be a shortage of resources that tell us how to help parents and families of the youngest learners. It starts with third grade; but our youngest learners don't seem to be represented. Maybe we can add a workshop that includes information for them.

**C:** Karina Hudack said it's not just about including pediatricians. As we consider equity, we also need to consider including therapists and psychologists. Many families don't know the difference between or the need for a primary care physician/ the family doctor and a psychologist. In addition, we can partner with Special Education since we are considering the mental health theme. We also have the [Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy \(SRCL\) Discretionary Grant Program](#), which would make a great gateway to including LEAs.

- The 2018 Family Engagement Priorities: Cyndi La Marca Lessner and Kia McLeod presented a review of the 2018 Priorities.
  - After the Coalition's Monday, July 18 meeting, Chris Swanson ranked the 2018 Family Engagement Priorities.
  - For Promote Family Engagement, the top three focus areas included, Create Tips for Parents Take 15, Social Media Toolkit and Prioritize Connecting with Families.
  - For Training and Resources, the top three focus areas included MSDE Online Family Engagement Training, Promote Existing Resources/Materials and Create an Organizational Matrix to Help Understand Who, What and Where.
  - For Support Local Efforts for Family Engagement the top three focus areas included, Establish Family Engagement as a Resource to Develop Customizable Family Engagement Opportunities, Identify Models for Local Efforts (The Maryland Family Engagement Coalition

expands those successful local models to broader implementation.), and Bi-directional Sharing of Resources Through New Website (Repository).

- The members will break into three workgroups to brainstorm strategies.
- During the last 15 minutes, the workgroups will present the strategies for each priority.

### **Workgroup One: Promote Family Engagement (Top Three)**

- Create Tips for Parents “Take 15”
- Social Media Toolkit
- Prioritize Connecting with Families

Strategies: We were discussing different apps and advertising campaigns that are personable, funny and engaging. We want to find ways to promote family engagement other than telling people what to do. We want to show them how to do it.

1. Social media by audience
  - Different voice/ personas
  - Research on effective campaigns
  - Engaging authentic influences, role models and/or real people.
2. Videos- capturing real families from a variety of backgrounds.
3. Use a male voiceover- male centric.

### **Workgroup Two: Training and Resources (Top Three):**

- MSDE Online Family Engagement Training
- Promote Existing Resources/Materials
- Create an Organizational Matrix to Help Understand Who, What and Where

Strategies: We discussed different ways to get information out to families and community-based organizations. What really matters is the target audience. The message needs to be for that particular audience. Then the goal is to work backwards to determine what information needs to be distributed and what vehicles we will use (ex. two-three minute interactive videos, webinars, Facebook live, etc.)

1. Use technology to reach more families and providers.
  - Ability to use on various platforms.
  - Shorter/more targeted training videos
  - Linking already existing resources to MSDE websites.
2. Ensuring providers are aware of available resources
3. More comprehensive resources for multilingual families
  - Partner with local councils to promote this
4. Developing community resource map to help families navigate
  - Ensure resources can be searched by county

5. Gap analysis currently taking place to help streamline resources and connect agencies.
6. Connect website to the MD AAP for health resources (physicians)
7. Develop tip sheets based on discipline
  - Are you a teacher, pediatricians (how to interact with parents).
8. Organizational matrix (include services provided such as location and mission statement).

**Workgroup Three: Support Local Efforts for Family Engagement (Top Three):**

- Establish Family Engagement as a Resource to Develop Customizable Family Engagement Opportunities
- Identify Models for Local Efforts (The Maryland Family Engagement Coalition expands those successful local models to broader implementation.)
- Bi-directional Sharing of Resources through New Website (Repository).

Strategies: We discussed GAP identification from the stand point of bi-directional sharing of resources, looking at the new website and customizing what we offer here. What we really need to do is dig into the website to see what's there and what's not there. This knowledge will lead us to developing that understanding of who needs additional outreach.

1. Family Engagement Coalition as a resource to develop experiences
    - Explore Family Engagement Toolkit for examples of events, resources to replicate.
    - Explore our own internal members to educate and inform the Coalition to advance/customize our work. Also bring in external guests to advance our work/reach. (e.g. DLLR and Correctional Facilities.)
  2. Identify models for local efforts
    - Survey to local jurisdictions groups (e.g. Judy Centers, ECACS, Libraries) to determine effective models to replicate.
  3. Bi-directional sharing of resources (via new website)
    - Perform NA of new website to identify what is there to share and what is not there to determine potential outreach opportunities-new partners to share ideas with the Coalition.
    - Involve pediatricians, librarians and others to provide monthly article and/or tips for parents/providers.
- Future Meetings - 3rd Monday - every other month from 1- 3:30 p.m.
    - Monday, Oct. 15, 2018