



Maryland Family Engagement Coalition
Monday, Oct. 15, 2018
Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Paola Andujar, Schehenede Asler, Diane Bonanni, Wendy Baysmore-Dantzler, Julie Dobies, Evelyn English, Nancy Garcia, Mary Gunning, Ashley Fehringer, Tresa Hanna, Keri Hyde, Cyndi La Marca Lessner, Melanie Martin, Kia McLeod, Nora Morales, Chris Peusch, Lisa Rhodes, Carrie Sanders, Patty Stine, Dorothy Stoltz, Chris Swanson

- **The Maryland Family Engagement Coalition New Co-Chair Introduction: Dorothy Stoltz, Carroll County Public Library, introduced Keri Hyde as the new Maryland Family Engagement Co-chair.**
 - Keri Hyde has spent more than 15 years working for Howard County government addressing issues affecting children, youth and families.
 - She has worked closely with the Howard County Public School System and the Howard County Early Childhood Advisory Council.
 - She is an innovative leader with an extensive background in public-private partnerships, family engagement and community-based programming.
 - Prior to her work in local government, she was an elementary school teacher in Carroll County, and started her career in social services, working with individuals and families facing substance abuse.
 - Keri Hyde holds a post-graduate certification in Elementary Education from McDaniel College, and a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Anthropology from Washington and Lee University.

- **Monkeying Around Presentation: Krista Respass, Managing Director, Early Childhood Education Services for Maryland Public Television, provided an overview of Monkey Around.**
 - Maryland Public Television and the Build Initiative has an exciting new project on the horizon that Maryland is developing with Boston's WBGH Public Radio.
 - Boston's WBGH Public Radio is currently expanding its early childhood content with a new show that focuses on computational thinking.
 - Monkeying Around, which will be renamed, is about a family of monkeys.
 - The new title will be announced shortly.
 - Monkeying Around is WGBH's latest preschool STEM initiative.
 - This project, funded by the National Science Foundation, aims to encourage young families to explore and practice computational thinking together.
 - The definition of Computational Thinking, or CT, is a set of foundational skills enabling children to identify, understand and creatively solve problems.

- Monkeying Around will capitalize on the power of storytelling, appealing characters, and relatable storylines to teach computational thinking to preschoolers through animated and live-action videos, a website, hands-on activities, and resources for parents.
- Right now, the property consists of about nine web episodes, music videos and hands-on activities that families can use to engage in building these skills.
- There are discussions underway with PBS about producing a pilot show; but right now, it is only web-based programming.
- The goal is to share these resources with families across the state, work in partnership with family engagement, and to advise WBGH in its final production of a new family engagement toolkit.
- Maryland’s role is to work in partnership to engage families with these resources and provide feedback to WBGH about effective strategies, materials, messaging, etc.

Q: Chris Swanson: What is the format of the web episodes? Will these be interactive games for kids?

A: Right now, there are the web episodes and animated short stories. These are reinforced by the music videos that include songs that promote problem solving. There is also the collection of what we call hands-on activities that families and kids can do together during different types of family engagement events. Our low-tech or no-tech is the process of encouraging this type of thinking. We are brainstorming what kind of additional tools might be helpful for family engagement.

Q: Patty Stine: Will the hands-on activities be available for parents and families to actually purchase? If so, will it include a shopping list that says if you (parents and families) purchase these items together, you (parents and families) will be doing this.

A: For the hands-on activities, we need to determine how we want to present to programs and families. There will be some sort of kit that has all of the materials in it. Keep in mind that most of the activities will be things that parents and families already have around the house.

Q: Evelyn English: In terms of the cast of monkeys: Daisy, Maisie, Fred, and Bo—are you considering changing the characters names?

A: The characters are staying. They actually tested very well with all of the audiences.

- **The Maryland Family Engagement Summit: Wendy Dantzler, MSDE, debriefed the Coalition on the results of the 2018 Maryland Family Engagement Summit Survey.**

- The 2018 Maryland Family Engagement Summit was a huge success.
- For this year’s survey, Ready At Five included questions about demographics in order to learn more about attendees.
- In response to the “What’s Your Profession?” question, over 69 percent said “other”.
- For next year’s Summit, the planning committee needs to determine what other professions would be interested in attending the Summit.
- Over 57 percent of attendees attended the Summit for the first time.
- Over 90 percent of attendees were women.
- The planning committee needs to brainstorm strategies for attracting more men.
- The value of the 2018 Family Engagement Summit is evident from both attendance and participant feedback.

- The results of this evaluation will be used to inform future MSDE Division of Early Childhood family engagement events.

Q: What is the capacity of the Maritime's auditorium?

A: I believe it is 300.

Q: Do we need to revisit the conversation about moving to a new location that can accommodate more people?

A: This question was raised during the last Coalition meeting. I believe Chris Swanson suggested another venue that was free of charge.

A: Chris Swanson: I suggested hosting the Summit; it might not be free of charge, at one of the state's community colleges or universities. With Hopkins, parking will be a challenge. However, other community colleges or universities have adequate parking, and may be a better fit for the Summit.

Q: We should be looking at accessibility and our target audience. Can parents get to the location?

Q: Should we move it to a weekend to attract more parents?

Q: Should we add a small fee in order to ensure commitment from attendees?

A: We looked at charging a small amount. Then we had to review the logistics of a fee-based event because we are a state agency.

C: Attendance is not the issue. Our goal is 300. Over 250 people attended.

Q: What about the timing of the event?

A: We could go toward mid-August; but that starts to interfere with teachers who are busy planning for the new school year and professional development. We only have a small window.

Q: Why was the earlier date in August taken off the table?

A: That date was not available at the venue. That next available date was mid-August, which again was back-to-school planning time.

C: One of the things that I hope we can continue to discuss is keeping this annual provider-focused family engagement summit. However, we can look at hosting a regional family engagement summit for parents and families. This way we can host it during the evenings and weekends. We can attract not only families, but also providers who are unable to attend events during the day. We help regionals use our format. They will have the ability to focus on their individual community needs. It all depends on funding; but that is something we need to keep in mind for the future. We have done a lot of provider-focused work. Now it is time to shift our focus to parents and families.

Q: So would we be hosting these regional events?

A: No. The local councils would host these events.

C: I think we need to be intentional when it comes to the event schedule. We had many attendees who did not stay the full day.

Q: Are the morning sessions and afternoon workshops too long?

A: The reason for the two-hour sessions is to qualify for the CEUs. We do need to reexamine the timing between each session because it is too long.

Nora Morales suggested modifying the event schedule to ensure attendees are able to take advantage of the full day:

- 8:00-9:00 a.m. Registration & Breakfast
 - 9:00-10:00 a.m. Keynote
 - 10:00 a.m.-noon First Session
 - 12:00-1:30 p.m. Lunch
 - 1:30-3:30 p.m. Second Session
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- **Cyndi La Marca Lessner, MSDE, presented an option for the 2019 Family Engagement Summit Keynote address.**
 - Based on feedback and Dr. Salmon's priorities, the planning committee wants to focus on equity for next year.
 - The committee also wants to focus on issues affecting the state such as the suspension and expulsion policy and behavioral health.
 - In terms of the keynote, MSDE is proposing Dr. Rosemarie Allen.
 - Dr. Rosemarie Allen has served as a leader in early childhood education for nearly 40 years.
 - Her life's work is centered on ensuring children have access to high quality early childhood programs that are developmentally and culturally appropriate.
 - She is currently an Assistant Professor in the School of Education at Metropolitan State University of Denver.
 - As Director of Programs at DYC, she was responsible for the education, health, and mental health of all adjudicated youth in the State. She was also responsible for the professional development of all Division staff members in order to ensure statewide culture change.
 - Rosemarie was appointed as a "Global Leader" for Early Childhood and works with professionals from more than 80 countries, sharing inspiration and information on issues impacting children and families worldwide.
 - She is also a respected keynote speaker, presenting on Implicit Bias, Culturally Responsive Practices, Cultural Competence, Micro-Aggressions, Racial Disproportionality, Privilege, Power, and Intersectionality, etc.
 - Rosemarie earned her B. A. from California State University, Master's of Education from Lesley University and Doctorate in Leadership for Educational Equity at the University of Colorado, Denver.

 - **Cyndi La Marca Lessner led the vote to approve Dr. Rosemarie Allen as the 2019 Maryland Family Engagement Summit Keynote. Full Coalition membership approved.**

 - **The Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five (PDG B-5): Cyndi La Marca Lessner, MSDE, provided an overview of this new funding opportunity.**
 - MSDE Division of Early Childhood has been working with our partners to get feedback for the PDG grant, which included a survey.

- MSDE Division of Early Childhood has a very short turnaround time to apply. It is due November 6.
- There are five main activities. The first one is a needs assessment. The second one is strategic planning and the third one is maximizing parent choice. This is where the Family Engagement Coalition fits into the grant.
- One of the questions that keeps coming up is how is the state engaging parents and families. The answer is the state is engaging parents and families through providers. However, the state is not engaging parents and families directly.
- The new website is currently focused on providers with plans underway to develop more content for parents and families.
- One of the state's goals with the PDG B-5 grant is to focus more on parents and families.
- This grant provides an opportunity to communicate with families using strategic messaging and marketing.
- The state is planning to host regional meetings in the mornings and evenings to make it more convenient for those providers and parents who want to attend; but cannot due to scheduling.
- How this all relates to the Maryland Family Engagement Coalition is the group's 2018 priorities focus a lot on communication.
- This is a great opportunity for family engagement.
- MSDE Division of Early Childhood should receive news about the PDG B-5 grant on December 17.