



**Maryland Family Engagement Coalition Meeting**  
**Monday, Dec. 17, 2018**  
Meeting Minutes

**Attendees:** Amanda Courie, Wendy Baysmore-Dantzler, Julie Dobies, Evelyn English, Alexander Gall, Nancy Garcia, Molley Garcia, Ashley Fehringer, Lisa Frye, Loretta Hoepfner, Karina Hudack, Keri Hyde, Cyndi La Marca Lessner, Melanie Martin, Marjorie Miles, Kia McLeod, Karyn Spellman, Tenaeya Rankin, Lisa Rhodes, Karmen Rouland, Carrie Sanders, Patty Stine, Dorothy Stoltz, Chris Swanson

- **The 2019 Maryland Family Engagement Summit: MSDE Wendy Dantzler invited members to select the dates and times for the summit planning committee meetings.**
  - Planning is underway for the 2019 Maryland Family Engagement Summit.
  - The grant manager for this event is Wendy Dantzler.
  - The Summit will be held at the Maritime Conference Center again this year.
  - Coalition members who are interested in volunteering may sign up for a variety of duties, including registration, facilitators, ushers (including lunch escorts), and more.
  - Two new volunteer roles were added: floaters and greeters.
  - Floaters will be responsible for ensuring facilitators' and presenters' needs are met.
  - Greeters will stand by the entrances to direct attendees to the Summit area.
  - Eight rooms were reserved for the breakout sessions.

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**Coalition Members Vote:**

***The vote for the 2019 Maryland Family Engagement Summit Planning Committee Meetings: Members voted unanimously to shorten the Coalition meetings by 30 minutes. The Summit Planning Committee will meet from 3-4 p.m. immediately following the Coalition meetings.***

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- **The Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five (PDG B-5): MSDE Cyndi Lessner explained to members that the MSDE Division of Early Childhood had not received any updates about the grant by the time of the meeting.**
  - A special thanks to all of the Coalition members who participated in the Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five (PDG B-5) electronic survey.
  - Members will receive a status update as soon as the information becomes available.

- **Suspension and Expulsion Fact Sheets: MSDE Kia McLeod and Carroll County Public Library Dorothy Stoltz led a group discussion about the draft Suspension and Expulsion fact sheets.**
    - During the last meeting, some members expressed a need for a more user-friendly document to distribute to parents, families, providers, and teachers.
    - The IDEALS Institute created draft facts sheets for both target audiences.
    - The fact sheets will be featured on the *Maryland Families Engage* website where early care and education providers can download the document and share with parents and families.
    - The fact sheets will be shared on social media.
    - Members were asked to review the fact sheets prior to the meeting.
    - The group discussion will focus on providing feedback on the look, design, and tone of the fact sheets.
    - Members who have more-detailed feedback should forward to Kia McLeod via e-mail by Friday, Dec. 21, 2018.
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**Note: The following is the Suspension and Expulsion feedback captured from the Coalition members:**

**Keri Hyde:** I think it is beautiful. However, it does not print well because of the white on color.

**Loretta Hoepfner:** I agree. It is very hard to read white on color background and the fonts are small.

**Dorothy Stoltz:** The graphic at the top looks more like early elementary to elementary.

**Marjorie Miles:** The graphic looks like the family is walking away. It is not engaging.

**Chris Swanson:** Another option for the graphics is to use the MFE logo. I know this is not a specific family engagement document, but it is produced by MFE. I also think in order to get larger fonts; we will have to cut some of the content.

**Loretta Hoepfner:** Who is the intended audience for the fact sheets? How will it be distributed?

**A:** One is for parents and families; and the other one is for early care and education providers. It will be posted on the website where we will encourage providers to share with parents and families. It will be distributed in our e-newsletter, *The FE Toolkit "In Action"*.

**Dorothy Stoltz:** I think the paragraphs should be broken up a little more. Bold the important words so that people reading it can identify the important sections more quickly.

**Loretta Hoepfner:** It does not say who produced it and who to contact for more information.

**Julie Dobies:** Will school websites post the fact sheets? Should we add more information about where families should go? Not that we should list all schools; but we should add more information about where parents and families can get more information.

**A:** If we direct them back to their county or jurisdiction, we will have to make sure they have this information. I am not sure that they do. The fact sheets refer to the guidance document that was produced by the Division of Early Childhood for child care settings and programs. The legislation is for public schools. I think we need to do more research before directing them to the schools.

**Loretta Hoepfner:** In terms of the colors, we need to be consistent on both fact sheets so that parents/families and educators can easily identify which document is for them. If we do red/purple for educators, we should do purple/red for parents/families. The “for more information” should be the same color on both documents.

**Marjorie Miles:** Can we make the language more positive? Preventing Expulsion and Suspension: Keeping Children In School

**A:** I like that one.

**Julie Dobies:**

- Font bigger on both
- Logo in either corner so to have more room for boxes
- More bullet points in foundation section of educator one
- More bullet points in MSDE section on family one
- Add link where the policy can be found at MSDE

**Keri Hyde:**

- Add logos (heading)
- Add ages (heading)
- Remove “s” in experiences
- Change Programs to Intervention
- Provide examples of services
- Speak with your providers (The Family’s Role)
- Providers need a reminder to “discuss calmly and respectfully (on Parent fact sheet; but not provider fact sheet.

**Patty Stine:**

- Bold for important words or phrases so that the reader can scan quickly to find out the key message and read more if they choose.

**Lisa Rhodes:**

- The colors are too dark. It can be hard to read white lettering on dark color. In addition, I think it does not meet ADA compliance, as it is hard to read.
- Too small lettering –also hard to read

- Too much information can be overwhelming. **Using bullet points** can help people organize information. **Bolding target words** help when people skim.
- **Clarify the ages** of children that this covers (possibly on the top header)

**Andreia Searcy for Nora Morales:**

- I like that the fact sheets are short, sweet and to the point. I think this helps with clarity for the parents especially.
- These documents look good! Just a few considerations...

What Families Need to Know, Under "The Family's Role"

- Share any information (e.g., medical, social emotional, trauma, prior educational experiences/special programming/existing IEPs) as soon as possible to inform the school team of how best meet the needs of the whole child.

What Every Early Childhood Educator Should Know/Foundation

- Is a parent being asked to shadow their child considered suspension? (Reference 2nd paragraph, 3rd line)

- **Family Engagement Survey: Ready At Five Keri Hyde presented an overview of and distributed a Family Engagement Survey to the Maryland Family Engagement Coalition members.**
  - Currently, we do not have a variety of ways to measure family engagement.
  - JHU is working in partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools to design a survey to measure family engagement.
  - The process started with a small focus group, including administrators, teachers, and parents.
  - They were asked to complete an exercise, which included ranking 106 items as it relates to family engagement's relevance, feasibility, and changeability.
  - The goal is to think about relevance to a child's academic success with a ranking of zero, one, and two.
  - Relevance: Is a child's attendance at school relevant to a child's academic success?
  - Feasibility: Thinking about the parents that the city school system serves, is this feasible for all parents, some parents or no parents at all?
  - Changeability: Do the schools have the ability to influence?
  - This is a unique opportunity to have the Maryland Family Engagement Coalition participate in this exercise.
  - This survey is confidential so we cannot share or distribute.
  - Members' responses will be shared with the researchers.
  - Researchers will be presenting this information during the spring ECAC meeting.

***Note: Members have 20 minutes to complete the survey.***

- **Kellogg Grant: Carroll County Public Library Dorothy Stoltz shared family engagement activities.**
  - For libraries, it is the end of the second year for the MSDE Division of Early Childhood grant.
  - For year two, 13 library systems participated.
  - The libraries served over 122,000 children, parents, and families.
  - This number included purchasing educational toys for the learning centers.
  - The librarians looked at the many families who participated in story time, and how many had access to the educational materials.
  - Another library focused on purchasing books and other reading materials for their Community Action Agency waiting room.
  - Howard County bought 50 sets of early learning kits to raffle or giveaway to those families who attended special events.
  - More families with young children visited different branches because of the new materials.
  - St. Mary's County collaborated with the detention center and the Department of Social Services to assist inmates with reading stories to their children.
  - Using the iPad that was purchased under the grant, librarians videotaped the sessions to share with the inmates' children.
  
- **Become a Partner (*Maryland Families Engage*): Carroll County Public Library Dorothy Stoltz led the workgroup discussion to determine how-to become a Maryland Families Engage Partner.**
  - One of the challenges we are facing is the number of individuals, groups or organizations interested in becoming a Maryland Families Engage partner.
  - One of the recommendations include developing a two-tier system, including how-to become a Maryland Families Engage friend.
  - Questions to ask: how, who, what, and why.
  - Coalition members will brainstorm a formal process for "becoming a partner and/or friend".

**Chris Swanson:** Are we defining this with some sort of financial level contribution?

**A:** I think this is why we want to pick your brain. We want to break members up in to workgroups to brainstorm what it means to be a Maryland Families Engage partner. Each group should come up with two to three suggestions.

**Chris Swanson:** Then the related question comes up again. Officially, from a financial structure standpoint, what is the Coalition? Is it under MSDE as an agency? Is it a 501c3?

**A:** The Maryland Family Engagement Coalition is a currently under MSDE. It is staffed by MSDE. In reference to your original question about whether or not this concerns funding, it is actually about the Maryland Families Engage website. Currently, we have partners listed who are Coalition members, family-serving organizations, and groups who are doing family engagement work through grant funding.

I would like to focus on what it means to become a partner or friend. In other words, we attend these meetings, volunteer for the summit, provide input and feedback for a lot of materials and surveys, and the other the contributions we make for family engagement. This came up because we are getting requests to become a partner. There is no formal process in place.

In order to become a friend or partner, do we put their logos on the page or do they have to attend meetings? We need to define it.

***Some of the recommendations include:***

<u>BECOME A PARTNER:</u>	<u>BECOME A FRIEND:</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Coalition members	<input type="checkbox"/> Formal Request to Coalition
<input type="checkbox"/> Family-serving organizations	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong FE Focus/Program
<input type="checkbox"/> FE Work (through grant funding)	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributes Content to MFE website (four to six annually)
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributes Content to MFE website (two annually)	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual FE Presentation

**Chris Swanson:** I think that makes sense. That is why I was asking about the structure. As a state agency, you can accept in-kind donations. For monetary donations, we would have to set up some sort of non-profit organization.

**Evelyn English:** My questions is what is the Maryland Family Network? Are they partners or friends? How did we select our partners on the website? Did we have criteria?

**A:** The partners that are currently listed are members of the Coalition, and family-serving organizations who do family engagement work with or without MSDE grant funding. They have supported the work that we do, and are a big part of how we got here.

**Dorothy Stoltz:** So the members of the Coalition are grandfathered.

**A:** That is correct.

**Cyndi Lessner:** Someone made a very important point that when you think of partnerships, you think of some sort of financial arrangement. As long as we are under MSDE, we will not be able to establish these type of partnerships. For now, I think we can say “friends of” family engagement. We are doing the work and continuing to push this work forward; but can we continue to say “partners” without justifying “what is a partner”?

**Chris Swanson:** Is partnership synonymous with Coalition membership? Then we raise a different question here: what is the right size of the Coalition? If everybody becomes a partner, then the size of the Coalition swells to, at some point, being ineffective. A partner is someone who provides financial contributions versus services. In this case, we are all providing in-kind or have done so in the past. Friends would do a lot of the work to move forward, maybe not as formal. A friend will provide access to their parents/families to do a focus group. A friend will contribute articles to the Maryland Families Engage website.

**Julie Dobies:** A friend would volunteer to help with the Summit or would offer service hours for volunteering to do family engagement work.

**Keri Hydde:** I think it is about cross promotion. At the bare minimum, it is linking to another organization’s website or sharing events. If we are talking about moving beyond providing a link, then there needs to more discussion.

**Chris Swanson:** That is a great point and the reason it falls into the friends category. A partner implies a deeper level of connection. If a partner ever has a scandal, then you will be associated with that scandal because you are a partner. With a friend, you have a little less involvement.

**Loretta Hoepfner:** If our bylaws define who our Coalition members are, why are we bringing the word “partner” in at all? Initially, we were talking about three different levels. We have, as defined by our bylaws, numbers. Then we have this other group of people who want to do work for or with us. Right now, we have Coalition members and we will be establishing more “friends”. We will have plenty of “friends”. Therefore, if we have a company such as Brickbodies who says we will distribute your fliers if you put our logo on your website. That is not what we want.

- Future Meetings - 3rd Monday - every other month from 1- 3:30 p.m.
  - 2019 Meeting Dates
  - February 25, April 15, June 17, August 19, October 21, December 16