



## COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD

December 18, 2018

### Kirwan Commission

### Community Action Board Recommendations and Support Statement

The Community Action Board (CAB) is the federally mandated anti-poverty group in Montgomery County. The Board provides oversight to the Montgomery County Community Action Agency and the County's Head Start program, along with the Head Start Parents Policy Council. Recognizing the critical importance of a comprehensive model early care and education, this issue has been a longtime priority for the Board. The Board has advocated at the local, state, and federal levels for expanded access to affordable, high quality early care and education for lower income residents, emphasizing the need to fund integrated holistic, family support services to address barriers.

The CAB created an ad hoc committee to discuss the findings and recommendations from the Kirwan Commission Working Group 1 – Early Childhood Education.

The Committee considered supporting the following recommendations:

1. Priority in expansion will be given to special populations (low income, students with special needs, and English learners). The CAB strongly believes these special populations will benefit the most from services and will have the greatest impact. (pg. 4, #4).
2. Priority in expansion in areas where there are "child care deserts." The CAB supports strategically placing and expanding the program to geographic areas where this is already a need. Furthermore, it is areas with child care deserts where working families tend to live. Such areas lack reliable public transportation among other barriers. (pg. 5, #6)
3. Priority in public school construction and finding innovative ways to create pre-K classrooms. We believe properly planning for the increase in demand of space is crucial and we support the potential collaborations that could result from finding classrooms in a mixed delivery system. (pg. 5, #10)

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4. Incremental sliding scale to avoid the cliff effect. (pg. 6, #4). The Self-Sufficiency Standard notes that families often need support, even after their income increases. "Often the increase [in income] is too small to cover all household expenses, without assistance, all at once."<sup>1</sup> The CAB strongly supports a sliding scale to allow incremental implementation of preschool fees. This is a strategic way to ensure families are not overburdened or ineligible without preparation or transition planning.
5. Increase incentives and funding to provide professional development for staff. As the required credentials to teach pre-K will increase, the CAB agrees assistance will be needed to recruit, train, and keep qualified individuals in the classrooms. We believe families can benefit from sending their children to high quality programs and they may become providers, furthering their financial stability. (pg. 10, #7, pg. 11, #1, 3)
6. Expansion of coaching/infrastructure to providers to meet EXCELS requirements (pg. 10, #2, pg. 11, #6). The CAB recognizes the challenges many providers will face in order to meet higher EXCELS rating levels. We encourage the state to provide additional support to providers to help ease the burdens of cost and time that they will experience.
7. Focus outreach and recruitment efforts on diverse staff that mirror the community. The CAB strongly believes in the importance of training in cultural competency to serve the diverse population and having staff that reflect children's home cultures. (pg. 11, #10)
8. Require all classrooms to administer the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) (pg. 13) The CAB supports a census administration of the KRA to support teachers in lesson planning and instruction for the children in each classroom.
9. Support the expansion of Judy Centers, Infants & Toddlers Programs and Family Support Centers to serve up to the age of 5. (pg. 14). CAB recognizes the importance of supportive services for young children and their families, which have been a key component in the success of Head Start programs and are at the core of two-generation approaches to reduce poverty. We encourage expansion of support programs that help meet the diverse needs of all families.
10. CAB recommendation: We encourage the Kirwan commission to use a racial equity lens in their current deliberation.
11. CAB recommendation: CAB feels that in a mixed delivery system that uses both the public-school system and community-based settings for Pre-K slots:
  - Funding should be through either the Montgomery County Government or a quasi-governmental organization to manage, direct, and provide oversight to the Montgomery County Public School System (MCPS) and independent community-based settings;
  - Funding to community-based programs for Pre-K classes should be provided in a way that would preserve the financial stability of community ECE providers and support the entire ECE system;
  - Distribution of funds should not impact the financial viability of family support and anti-poverty programs by decreasing the amount of discretionary funds in the County budget.

The CAB looks forward to continuing to work with County and state officials as the Kirwan Commission's recommendations are finalized. We encourage legislators to consult with our partners at Montgomery County Public Schools, the Early Childhood Coordinating Council, and the Commission on Child Care as these recommendations move forward.

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<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County Self-Sufficiency Standard [montgomerycountymd.gov/communityaction](http://montgomerycountymd.gov/communityaction)