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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D. *Lillian M. Lowery*
DATE: March 28, 2013
SUBJECT: Update on Early Learning

- 2012-2013 School Readiness Report

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide information from the report, *Children Entering School Ready to Learn: School Readiness Information for School Year 2012-2013*.

BACKGROUND:

2012-2013 School Readiness Report

Since school year 2001-02, Maryland’s kindergarten students have been evaluated by their teachers using the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) Kindergarten Assessment to determine what the children know and are able to do when they start formal education in public schools. Each year since 2001, the data collected from these evaluations has been compiled into a large, technical data report, which is shared with policymakers and practitioners to show how well kindergarten students are doing in terms of school readiness.

The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) results indicate that Maryland students entering kindergarten this school year continue to enter school ready to learn. The percentage of incoming kindergartners who were rated by their teachers as “fully ready,” using customized Work Sampling System® (WSS) assessment composite results, was eighty-two percent (82%), a slight decline from last year but, an increase of thirty-three percent (33%) from the baseline year of 2001-02. The number of children assessed as “fully ready” increased by 1,400 over last year but slipped back by one percentage point from last year’s eighty-three (83%) percent.

According to the teachers’ assessment of *Language and Literacy*, thirty-six percent (36%) more children were rated “fully ready” compared to youngsters who entered kindergarten in 2001-02. Thirty-five percent (35%) more children were rated “fully ready” in the *Mathematics* domain compared to youngsters who entered kindergarten in 2001-02.

The trend from school year 2001-02 is evident for all subgroups. The improvement among low-income children and children with disabilities was significant with forty-two percent (42%) and twenty-seven (27%) respectively for the Composite for each group. The increase for English Language Learners from 2001-02 is thirty-four percent (34%) for the composite and thirty-one percent (31%) in the domain of *Language and Literacy*.

The upward trajectory from school year 2001-02 reflects the statewide efforts of improving the early learning opportunities for young children as they begin their school career. Full-day kindergarten, expanded prekindergarten, a significant increase of early childhood programs obtaining state or national program accreditation, a huge increase of child care workers participating in a statewide career ladder program, and more families being aware of the importance of early learning and development contributed to the improvements over the past 11 years.

Use of the information

While the results inform policymakers and program administrators, it also serves as a general gauge of incoming kindergarteners skills for teachers. Since the beginning of this project, teachers have received professional development in the use of the assessment information and how it informs instruction. Based on a survey with teachers, the information helps them to learn more about their students' individual learning needs, helps in grouping children, and is invaluable in reporting student profiles to parents or to school-based interdisciplinary teams. All local school systems have adopted an electronic format of collecting and reporting data. This format allows for immediate feedback on the learner profiles of individual students and the teachers' group of students. Since 2001, most local school systems have added diagnostic assessment tools to follow up on students' learning, primarily in early reading and math.

The information is also being used by early care and education providers such as child care programs and Head Start to learn more about the curricular expectations in kindergarten and to adjust their programs to meet these expectations for all domains of learning.

SUMMARY:

Administered in the fall of 2012, results of this school year's school readiness report confirm the high number of children being ready compared to last year. In 2012-13, 82 percent of incoming kindergarteners were evaluated as being ready for school. Kindergarten teachers and early care and education providers are using the information to adjust instruction or programs for young children.

Both the large data report and smaller report will be available online at http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/newsroom/publications/school_readiness

ACTION:

For information only. No action required.

Attachments