

## **“CHILDREN FIRST, A VISION FOR ALL”**

A Memorandum of Understanding Between the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Head Start Association for Developing Successful Linkages Between Head Start and Public Schools

### **I. Parties to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

- A. Maryland State Department of Education, an agency of the State of Maryland, hereafter referred to as “MSDE”; and
- B. Maryland Head Start Association, an organization of Head Start and Early Head Start administrators, staff, parents, and friends of Head Start, hereafter referred to as “Head Start”; and

Hereinafter, MSDE includes the Maryland State Department of Education and the Division of Instruction, Early Learning Office. Head Start includes the members of the Maryland Head Start Association.

### **II. Purpose of MOU**

- A. To work together effectively to improve outcomes and provide opportunities for children birth through five to experience school success
- B. To promote collaboration among the parties and their local counterparts
- C. To encourage and support the development of local and/or regional agreements between public school systems and Head Start programs.

### **III. Authority/Program Description**

- A. The Maryland State Department of Education is an agency of the State of Maryland governed by the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland
- B. The authority for Head Start is found in Head Start Act, Title V of the Economic Opportunities Act of 1964 as amended. Head Start and Early Head Start are federally funded, comprehensive child development programs for low-income families with children from birth to age five, pregnant women, and children with disabilities

### **IV. Guiding Principles**

- A. Create and maintain a meaningful partnership to ensure acceleration of school readiness and eliminate the "achievement gap”

- B. Develop successful linkages within the context of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832), the Bridge to Excellence as codified in Title 5, Subtitle 2 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and the Subcabinet's Achieving School Readiness: A Five-Year Action Agenda for Maryland
- C. Plan and implement strategies based on practice and research that have proven to support children's school success
- D. Encourage and support the development of local and/or regional agreements that incorporate the guiding principles and strategies included in this MOU
- E. Respect the uniqueness of each locality's needs and resources when promoting local and/or regional agreements
- F. Promote the involvement of all other members of the early care and education community
- G. Incorporate by reference all provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start

**V. Joint Planning Actions**

- A. Support the development of regional and/or jurisdiction-specific agreements that model this MOU
- B. Solicit information from all stakeholders for suggested ways of building knowledge and understanding of each other's programs
- C. Assure that regional and/or jurisdiction-specific agreements are included in Annual Updates to School Master Plans
- D. Align compatible, measurable curricular standards, using the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) primary outcomes and indicators, including the Voluntary School Curriculum content standards, and the Maryland Head Start Child Outcomes Framework
- E. Promote effective and efficient use of facilities and space utilization to meet prekindergarten requirements of the Bridge to Excellence in Public School Act
- F. Establish on-going planning process for mutual issues
- G. Evaluate measurable results of this MOU and children's progress according to existing data
- H. Institute a reciprocal process whereby Head Start and public school representatives would participate on early childhood planning committees
- I. Coordinate recruitment of eligible children to maximize services and avoid duplication
- J. Incorporate strategies that address the needs of children with disabilities, homeless children, and non-English speaking children
- K. Document and disseminate collaboration successes and best practices
- L. Market the MOU that articulates the vision of the partnership, "Children First, A Vision for All" to Head Start, public schools, other early care and education partners, parents, and the community.

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- M. Hold a kick-off event spearheaded by the Superintendent and Head Start  
Coordinate and disseminate Head Start and public school calendars to include family and professional development activities

**VI. Articulation Agreement**

- A. Develop effective transition procedures and practices
- B. Plan joint meetings for national and/or state program accreditation
- C. Create a curriculum articulation process, including joint professional development, between Head Start and the prekindergarten to grade 12 system (i.e., Maryland Model for School Readiness, Voluntary State Curriculum, Head Start Child Outcomes Framework)
- D. Align assessment and accountability measures in preschool with kindergarten
- E. Coordinate calendars of events and professional development to reinforce collaboration

**VII. Family Involvement:** All parties to this agreement will encourage local agreements that address on-going communication between parents and teaching staff and continued and enhanced family support as children move from Head Start to public schools through strategies that include, but are not limited to:

- A. Holding joint meetings and activities for families whose children attend public prekindergarten and Head Start programs
- B. Developing a process for Head Start parents to work with school staff on School Improvement Teams
- C. Encouraging the development of parent-teacher organizations in every school
- D. Assessing the extent of parental involvement in public schools of Head Start parents and provide outreach, as needed
- E. Holding parent-teacher organization annual policy meetings to discuss transition mechanisms between Head Start and public schools
- F. Planning joint Head Start/Public School parent events
- G. Developing articulation meetings between families, parents, counselors and school point persons
- H. Creating shared and consistent goals for dually enrolled children and families
- I. Holding regular, interactive parent-teacher meetings that address the needs of each student who is dually enrolled or receiving services from the public schools, including children with disabilities and non-English speaking children
- J. Scheduling on-going parental meetings to document children's progress

**VIII. Joint Staff Development :** All parties to this agreement agree to encourage Head Start programs and public schools to:

- A. Include each others' staff in applicable training opportunities, including, but

not limited to, the Maryland Model for School Readiness and other professional development opportunities

- B. Offer appropriate credit/credentialing for joint professional development
- C. Work with colleges to review and align early childhood coursework between MSDE, community colleges, four-year colleges, and the Child Care Administration
- D. Produce a joint needs assessment plan for professional development
- E. Jointly plan training based on needs assessments
- F. Identify and disseminate successful staff development practices
- G. Identify and disseminate opportunities for shared resources

**IX. Implementation:** All parties to this agreement will encourage local agreements that identify a mechanism or mechanisms for on-going Head Start and public school communication, including, but not limited to, creating or using an existing steering committee with Head Start and public school representation

**X. Termination for Default:** If either party fails to fulfill its obligations under this Agreement or otherwise violates any provisions of the Agreement, the Agreement may be terminated by written notice to the defaulting party. The notice shall specify the acts or omissions relied upon as cause for termination.

**XI. Termination for Convenience:** Performance under this Agreement may be terminated in accordance with this clause in whole, or from time to time in part, whenever either party shall determine that such termination is in the best interest. It is understood that this Agreement may be terminated for the convenience of the parties or for performance deemed to be unsatisfactory.

**XII. Modification:** This Agreement may be modified as MSDE and Head Start mutually agree in writing. Except for the specific provision of the Agreement which is thereby modified, the Agreement shall remain in full force and effect after such modification and shall be subject to the same laws, obligations, conditions, provisions, rules and regulations, as it was prior to the modification.

**XIII. Term of Contract:** The term of the Agreement shall be three (3) years from the date this Agreement is executed. This Agreement may be renewed as MSDE and Head Start mutually agree in writing.

**XIV. Signatures**

**For Head Start**

\_\_\_\_\_  
President, Maryland Head Start Association

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**For the Maryland State Department of Education**

\_\_\_\_\_  
State Superintendent of Schools

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date