

Chapter 346

(House Bill 350)

AN ACT concerning

Education – Early Learning Challenge Fund – Application for Grants

FOR the purpose of requiring the State Department of Education to apply for grants from the Early Learning Challenge Fund; requiring the Department to take certain actions before submitting an application; requiring the application to contain certain information; making this Act subject to a certain contingency; and generally relating to the application for grants from the Early Learning Challenge Fund.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That:

(a) The State Department of Education shall seek federal funds for early learning initiatives by submitting an application for grants from the Early Learning Challenge Fund.

(b) Before submitting an application for grants from the Early Learning Challenge Fund, the Department shall identify the conditions necessary for a competitive application and shall identify actions necessary to remove impediments to being competitive.

(c) (1) In the application for grants from the Early Learning Challenge Fund, the Department shall describe the ways it seeks to build a comprehensive, high-quality, early learning system for children birth to age five.

(2) The application shall include all of the information required for the Early Learning Challenge Fund, which may include information on the following:

- (i) early learning standards reform;
- (ii) evidence-based program quality standards;
- (iii) enhanced program review and monitoring of program quality;
- (iv) comprehensive professional development;
- (v) a coordinated system for facilitating screenings for disability, health, and mental health needs;

- (vi) improved support to parents;
- (vii) a process for assessing children's school readiness; and
- (viii) using data to improve child learning outcomes.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2010, contingent on the taking effect of federal legislation enacting the Early Learning Challenge Fund, and if federal legislation enacting the Early Learning Challenge Fund does not become effective before October 1, 2010, this Act shall be null and void without the necessity of further action by the General Assembly.

Approved by the Governor, May 4, 2010.