

Article - Education

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§7-1608.

(a) The Council shall:

(1) Conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry, including:

(i) The availability of high-quality prekindergarten services for low-income children in the State;

(ii) Health-related barriers to school readiness and early childhood educational success; and

(iii) An assessment of the availability of high-quality early childhood education and development programs that serve children with and without disabilities together;

(2) Identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally funded and State-funded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs;

(3) Assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2-year and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which the institutions have articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in a Head Start or prekindergarten program;

(4) Make recommendations:

(i) For increasing the overall participation of children in existing federal, State, and local child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations;

(ii) Regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the State;

(iii) Regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the State; and

(iv) For improvements to State early learning standards and how to undertake efforts to develop high-quality comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate;

(5) Hold public hearings and provide an opportunity for public comment on the activities described in items (1) through (4) of this subsection; and

(6) Perform any other duties that may be requested by the Governor.

(b) (1) On or before December 1, 2015, the Council shall submit to the Governor, the State Superintendent of Schools, and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly, a statewide strategic report on the activities described in subsection (a)(1) through (4) of this section.

(2) After submission of the report required under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the Council shall continue to meet periodically to review implementation of the report's recommendations and any changes in State and local needs after submission of the report.

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