

Maryland's Local Management Boards

Making A Difference for Children and Families, 1990-2010



By Phyllis Rozansky, Pathways to Results, L.L.C.
through the generous support of the Richard A. Henson Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation
JANUARY 2011

Executive Summary

A little over twenty years ago, Maryland took a bold step to improve the lives of the state's most vulnerable children and families by changing the ways citizens and government work together.

Maryland set out to:

- **Change services to be more comprehensive, family-focused and** community-based;
- **Change the way decisions were made**, to be more locally-driven, collaborative, and results-based; and
- **Change the way services are funded**, by de-categorizing funding and redirecting spending from "deep end," high cost out-of-home placement services to more preventive services, with funding decisions based on evidence of success.

The initiative started with an Executive Order that authorized the Governor's Office on Children and Youth and state agency partners to set a new course with communities, organized through new entities called Local Management Boards, or LMBs. The development of these entities was begun in Prince George's

County and followed by LMBs in Baltimore City and the counties on the Eastern Shore. With the investment of a five-year, \$7.5 million grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and supported by a national organization, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, Maryland moved to implement the Children's and Family Service System Reform initiative.

In 1990, encouraged by the promising changes underway, the General Assembly enacted legislation that authorized LMBs statewide, and by 1998 all 24 Maryland jurisdictions had an operating LMB. The LMBs were reauthorized in 2006 with clear mandates to strengthen decision-making capacity at the local level, implement effective service strategies, maintain high standards of accountability, influence allocation of resources across human service systems, and build public-private partnerships to improve results.

"The LMBs do so much for so little. They show what they can do for kids on a shoe-string budget. Even in a tough economy they are able to show results including working to help children be ready for school and succeed in school."

~ Senator Nancy J. King

SENATE CHAIR, JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN,
YOUTH AND FAMILIES
MEMBER, BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

Improving results for children, youth, and families is the focus of all LMB activities. Maryland established eight Child Well-Being Results, and all LMB programs, initiatives and partnerships are devoted to ensuring that:

- Babies born healthy
- Children completing school
- Children are healthy
- Children safe in their families and communities
- Children entering school ready to learn
- Stable and economically independent families
- Children successful in school
- Communities support family life

Marylanders Assess LMB Effectiveness and Impact

For this report, over 800 people familiar with the work of LMBs – from all of Maryland’s 24 local jurisdictions – responded to an electronic survey to assess the LMBs’ effectiveness and impact. Respondents are from all walks of life: parents, representatives of government agencies (state, county and city) and school districts, LMB board members, service providers, faith and business leaders, community volunteers, and others. The respondents gave LMBs very high marks for their effectiveness in carrying out their responsibilities under state law, as shown in Table I.

Similarly, by large margins respondents rated LMBs as making a positive difference in their communities. Table 2 shows the ways in which respondents believe LMBs most impact their communities, with the highest positive response rate given to LMBs’ success in achieving better results for children and families – their core role.

Tracking the Differences That LMBs Make in Their Communities

Annually, LMBs report on the progress being made towards achieving Maryland’s Results for Child Well-Being. Data presented in this report from LMB-funded programs in every one of Maryland’s local jurisdictions illustrate how LMBs and their partners help children enter school ready to learn and succeed in school, reduce youth violence, promote healthy youth development, keep children safe and in their own homes, and achieve other important results.

LMBS at a Crossroads: What Does the Future Hold?

Although the LMBs have a successful track record based on performance data and in the eyes of people across the state, they are at a critical juncture. With a 31% reduction in their programs since FY2009 and also in their core functions their capacity to fulfill their missions – and in some cases survive – is threatened by the impact of the recession and state budget reductions. Respondents to the survey conducted for this report express clearly what they believe will be lost if LMBs can no longer function:

- Outcomes for children, families and communities will be diminished;
- Local services and programs will be lost;
- Services are likely to be fragmented and duplicative, as they were before the LMBs; and
- Community services will experience a leadership void, damaging many aspects of local service systems.

In sum, there are multiple sources of evidence that LMBs are making a positive difference and that the state/local systems of which LMBs are a part have changed the landscape of services in Maryland for the better. It is now in the hands of Maryland’s Governor, legislators and state agency heads – and in fact all of those who care about better futures for children and families – as to whether the results for children and families can be sustained.

TABLE 1.

| LMB Effectiveness Carrying Out Key Roles and Responsibilities <i>(Score is Combined Effective/Very Effective Responses)</i> | Response |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Assess community needs | 88% |
| 2. Build collaborative partnerships | 88% |
| 3. Help to develop programs that respond to community needs and strengths | 85% |
| 4. Identify and work to close service gaps | 84% |
| 5. Maintain standards of accountability | 83% |
| 6. Develop strategies that achieve clearly defined results for children and youth | 81% |
| 7. Serve as resources for agencies and grassroots organizations | 81% |
| 8. Create an effective system of services, supports, and opportunities | 79% |
| 9. Leverage new and existing grants and funding streams | 79% |
| 10. Represent local needs and concerns to local government | 78% |
| 11. Influence the allocation of resources across systems | 73% |
| 12. Represent local needs and concerns to state policymakers | 73% |
| 13. Keep the community informed on progress being made | 71% |
| 14. Engage a diverse representation of individuals across the community to participate in local decision-making | 71% |

TABLE 2.

| LMB Impact <i>(Score is Combined Rating of Medium and High Impact)</i> | Response |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Contribute to achieving better results for children and families in our county | 87% |
| 2. Operate programs that are achieving a high rate of success | 86% |
| 3. Enhance community resources to deliver needed services | 86% |
| 4. Raise awareness about child, youth, family and community needs | 86% |
| 5. Engage a diverse representation to participate in local decision-making about priorities, services and funding | 80% |
| 6. Leverage new and existing grants and funding streams to improve services for children | 80% |
| 7. Engage community stakeholders to take action to make a difference for children and families in their community | 79% |
| 8. Launch new programs in the county to benefit children and families | 79% |
| 9. Strengthen the decision-making capacity at the local level to set priorities and make funding decisions regarding services to children, youth and families | 77% |
| 10. Increases the capacity of service providers | 73% |