



**Monica Goldson, Ed.D.**  
Chief Executive Officer

February 14, 2020

Senator Paul Pinsky  
Chair, Senate EHEA Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 0533 – Teacher Certification Montessori Schools

Dear Senator Pinsky:

This letter is written to express my support for Senate Bill 0533, which would establish certification for Montessori teachers if they hold a Montessori related credential and a bachelor's degree. It would also authorize the State Board of Education to require future Montessori teachers to pass an examination. I would like to thank Senator Will Smith for introducing the bill.

Since 2016, Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) has supported teachers at our three Montessori schools--John Hanson Montessori, Judy Hoyer Montessori and Robert Goddard Montessori-- with obtaining Montessori certification credentials through our Title II grant funds. This has allowed us to staff our schools with individuals that can deliver the Montessori program with fidelity. These teachers have also had to obtain the certification required by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and pass the Praxis examination.

Senate Bill 0533 would allow a path for future Montessori educators to be certified based on their Montessori credentials and passing an examination identified by MSDE. We would have a recruitment tool to maintain the teachers needed for our three schools and also serve to ease the financial costs to the district. We could devote more time to retention of our teachers by supporting them with professional development and training along with other resources needed. We consider this alternative path to certification a support to the district. The Prince George's County Montessori programs are extremely popular with parents as our applications have increased each year. Moreover, research shows that currently Montessori teachers are unable to use their credentials to transfer among states as a pathway to state certification. This hampers our efforts to recruit and retain Montessori certified teachers.

As a lifelong educator in PGCPS and parent of students who have graduated from our PGCPS Montessori schools, I find the lack of Montessori certified teachers and administrators serves as an impediment to maintaining quality programming for our students. For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable vote on Senate Bill 0533.

Sincerely,

Monica E. Goldson, Ed.D.  
Chief Executive Officer