



**Testimony Concerning HB 1298:
“County Boards of Education - Pregnant and Parenting Students –
Policies and Reports”
Submitted to the House Ways and Means Committee
February 26, 2020**

Position: Support

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports HB 1298, which would support pregnant and parenting students.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability, affordability and quality of child care, family support services, and early education. Through our statewide network of Family Support Centers (FSCs), we provide services to parents with young children birth through age 3 to help them raise healthy children and build productive futures.

Located in 24 Maryland neighborhoods marked by high numbers of pregnant and parenting adolescents, families with low incomes, low birth-weight babies, high school dropouts, and unemployed adults, FSCs provide comprehensive, preventive services to pregnant women and young families with children under age 4, together.

FSCs routinely serve teen parents and their children. Some young mothers complete their coursework at FSCs and receive diplomas from their high schools while their babies are cared for in co-located early childhood classrooms. HB 1298 envisions the use of off-site resources for pregnant and parenting students, and FSCs are poised to partner with local school systems as they improve support systems to help these students meet the challenges they face.

Providing support for teen mothers as they work towards their degrees while raising young children is critical to promoting optimal outcomes for multiple generations.

MFN urges your favorable consideration of HB 1298.