



**Nzuri Malkia Birth Collective
Andrea N. Williams- Muhammad**

(443) 269-2926

andnic.williams@gmail.com

**HB 1298- County Boards of Education –
Pregnant and Parenting Students – Policies and Reports
February 26, 2019**

SUPPORT

Nzuri Malkia Birth Collective is comprised of birthworkers in Maryland focused on providing childbirth education, birth and postpartum support, and other supports such as lactation support to underserved and diverse populations. We offer our support for this legislation in hopes it will allow us to better serve our clients who are focused on completing their education while parenting their families.

For many serving as community-based doulas, we often support birthing persons who are still attending school. While there are many barriers in connecting them with services and needed support- they still remain determined and focused. The largest barrier is not in the availability of services and resources, but their ability to access them while maintaining a positive attendance record.

Many of the needed service providers offer office hours during school hours; as well as being located outside of their neighborhoods or in proximity to their schools. Since many of these service providers require face-to-face contact, birthing persons who attend school must lose a day of school and are marked absent, because they are not physically in the classroom. Often many are not given the opportunity to make-up missed work.

Further complicating the situation, is the lack of transportation support to scheduled appointments for needed services. Whether public transportation or other contracted transportation services requires the ability to pay as well as scheduling to be on time and for a safe return back home.

Birthing persons' ability to access care as well as receive needed supports in one central location that does not require them to leave school or be receive and absent on



Nzuri Malkia Birth Collective
Andrea N. Williams- Muhammad

(443) 269-2926

andnic.williams@gmail.com

their attendance record, is key to them completing their education and moving to a place of stability for themselves and their family.

Having accurate assessments of the birthing person currently within our school systems and understanding their needs and how we can better serve and support them has a lasting impact beyond birth. As a collective, we see far too often who simple barriers to needed services and support create a snowball effect and can exasperate an already tenuous situation and lead to not only them not finishing school but in the birth outcome itself.