



Testimony Concerning HB 206

Early Childhood Education - Prekindergarten Programs - Montessori Schools and Programs
Submitted to Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Senator Brian Feldman, Chair

March 15, 2023

Position: Support

Northcrest Montessori, an MSDE-approved Montessori school located in Howard County, strongly supports HB 206, which seeks to change the eligibility requirements for the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program and publicly-funded prekindergarten programs to include Montessori schools and programs. This bill will allow public Montessori programs and MSDE-approved Montessori schools and programs to participate in the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program while concurrently aligning the group requirements and staff requirements with existing COMAR regulations already in place (13A.6).

As proponents of early childhood education, Northcrest Montessori strongly believes that all children should have access to high-quality educational opportunities. Montessori schools such as ours have proven track records of delivering successful educational outcomes. By including Montessori schools and programs in the state's prekindergarten programs, we will be providing families with a broader range of educational options and opportunities, which will in turn help to ensure that all children have the foundation they need to succeed in school and beyond. Additionally, enabling Montessori schools to be providers will help counties achieve the established minimum proportion of eligible private providers required.

The proposed amendments to the eligibility requirements will ensure that Montessori schools and programs are held to the same standards as other prekindergarten programs, while also allowing for the unique quality components of Montessori classrooms to be maintained.

We urge a positive report on HB 206. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. P. Mehta".

Kavitha Mehta
Founder & Head of School