

**Informational Testimony regarding House Bill 206
Early Childhood Education – Prekindergarten Programs – Montessori
Schools and Programs**

**Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
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The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony on House Bill 206, which would alter the eligibility requirements for the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program and publicly funded prekindergarten programs to include certain operational requirements, classroom personnel credentials, and student-to-classroom personnel ratios for Montessori schools and programs.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

The Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program (PEGP) is intended to increase capacity for high-quality early childhood education services throughout the state. Current requirements include a classroom personnel-to-student ratio of no more than 1:10 with no more than 20 students in a classroom, a limit affirmed by recommendations from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Child Care.¹ This bill would create an exception for Montessori schools and programs, allowing such providers to remain eligible for PEGP funds with a classroom personnel-to-student ratio of up to 1:14 when some of the students are five years or

¹ Ratios and Group Sizes, Childcare.Gov (Accessed February 2023): <https://childcare.gov/consumer-education/ratios-and-group-sizes>

older. This proposed exemption exceeds the maximum recommended classroom personnel-to-student ratio of 1:12 for students over five years of age.²

² Ibid.