

Testimony Concerning HB 206

Early Childhood Education – Prekindergarten Programs - Montessori Schools and Programs
Submitted to House Ways & Means Committee
Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair

February 3, 2023

Position: Support

The Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies 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 at the same time aligning the group requirements and staff requirements with *existing* COMAR 13A.6 regulations already in place.

As proponents of early childhood education, we strongly believe that all children should have access to high-quality educational opportunities. Montessori schools have a proven track record 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.

In addition, 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 markers of Montessori classrooms to be maintained.

The Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies is a Montessori teacher education program located in Silver Spring, MD. We offer training at the Infant and Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary II and Administration levels. Our program began in 1980 and we work with adult learners who will be teaching in public and private school settings annually. The Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies is affiliated by the American Montessori Society (AMS), accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE), and approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

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

Hilary Green



Director
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