

FREDERICK *Montessori & Arts School* COUNTRY DAY

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

Frederick Country Day Montessori (& Arts) School supports HB 206, which seeks to change the eligibility requirements for the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant and publicly funded prekindergarten programs to include private school Montessori program such as ours. The bill will allow the integrity of our programs to not be compromised by aligning with the Comar 13A.6 regulations already in place. These Comar regulations currently in place allow Montessori schools to provide a mixed age classroom of three- and four-year-old students along with kindergarten age students in one classroom. Current Comar regulations also allow for the 1 to 15 ratio with a certified Montessori teacher which is one of the quality marks in Montessori philosophy; and a classroom size up to 30 children. Our classrooms are designed 30% larger than a typical classroom of 20.

Supporting the integrity and authenticity of the Montessori classroom and including them in this mixed delivery system will increase the opportunity of school choice for parents and a high-quality education for students who may not otherwise have that opportunity. Montessori philosophy is known for positive educational outcomes for the students and is a valuable alternative school choice.

Frederick Country Day Montessori (& Arts) School has been in operation providing a unique education promoting academics, peace, and outreach to our community since 1997. We look forward to expanding our reach to include income eligible populations that we have not been able to fully serve in the past. We invite you to visit our Primary classroom to see the opportunities that await students in our community. Thank you for not excluding private Montessori schools.

We urge you to give a positive report for HB 206. Thank you very much for your consideration.

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