

HB1441_The Arc MD and The Arc MC_ FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Ande Kolp

Position: FAV



Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
HB1441: Early Childhood Education – Publicly Funded
Prekindergarten Programs – Alterations
March 27, 2024
Position: Support

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to the rights and quality of life of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. For 65 years, The Arc Montgomery County has supported children, youth, adults, seniors and families affected by disabilities like autism and Down syndrome, by providing child care, work skills training, employment, community living services, resources, respite care and advocacy.

We are writing to urge a favorable report on HB1441: Early Childhood Education – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs – Alterations.

The Arc Montgomery County Karasik Family, Infant & Child Care Center, affectionately known as **KFICCC**, is a family-centered child care program. In every classroom, typically-developing children, children with developmental disabilities and children with special health care needs play and learn together. The staff includes pediatric registered nurses, trained child care providers, and a family worker who provides case management services. *Every child enrolled at KFICCC has the opportunity to thrive!*

At The Arc Montgomery County's KFICCC, it has been an ongoing and deepening struggle to attract and retain Pre-K teachers with the right credentials who are willing and qualified to support complex children with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. The changes in teacher certification requirements proposed through HB1441 would be very helpful to The Arc Montgomery County, and our capacity for supporting children with and without disabilities.

HB1441 takes essential steps to bolster the childcare workforce, resulting in more prekindergarten teachers and needed increases in prekindergarten slots across every district in Maryland. By removing barriers faced by private providers, this bill will foster the growth of a diverse and vibrant early childhood education workforce and overall landscape in our state.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future details the importance of having a thriving **mixed-delivery Pre-K system: integrating public schools and private community-based**

childcare providers to create options and accessibility. The changes to law, proposed through HB1441, would help drive progress toward the realization of this envisioned future!

It includes flexibilities/alternative pathways to achieving educator certification without compromising quality, establishing necessary support systems for community-based providers, and investing in programs that nurture our diverse childcare workforce.

The Arc Montgomery County's KFICCC is a national model for inclusive childcare, but the years since the pandemic have challenged its sustainability: It cannot operate without a sufficient workforce, and HB 1141 will help ensure there are workforce options and pathways that are greatly needed for The Arc and other providers around the state.

For all of these reasons, The Arc Maryland and The Arc Montgomery County support HB 1441 and urge the committee for a favorable report.

For more information, please contact:

Ande Kolp, Executive Director, The Arc Maryland akolp@thearcmd.org

Daria Cervantes, CEO, The Arc Montgomery County dariac@arcmontmd.org

HB1441-EEE_MACo_SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Brianna January

Position: FAV



House Bill 1441

Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment
and Budget and Taxation Committees

Date: March 27, 2024

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1441. HB 1441 tackles several impediments to pre-K expansion, including workforce shortages, lack of physical space for early childhood facilities, and subpar private provider engagement. **Importantly, this bill incorporates many of the suggestions from county governments to help effectively implement this critical aspect of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.**

On workforce development, HB 1441 creates pathways for more flexibility in provider qualifications and authorizes prospective staff to work in the field while pursuing the appropriate certifications. It also extends the Maryland Child Care Credential Program an extra two years through FY26 to recognize individual child care providers who increase their qualifications beyond the requirements of state licensing and registration regulations.

On facilities and capacity, HB 1441 authorizes local education agencies (LEAs) to lease space from the county government to use as pre-K facilities. Several counties own and maintain facilities that could be used for early childhood education. Allowing LEAs to lease these spaces increases facility capacity accessibly and affordably and makes use of otherwise vacant or unused spaces.

On private providers, HB 1441 makes several critical adjustments to the Blueprint's mixed-delivery system. The bill replaces the requirement that 50 percent of pre-K be serviced by private providers and instead makes it the "goal of the State." This is a reasonable adjustment as many LEAs are finding subpar interest in public pre-K from the private provider community. Additionally, HB 1441 creates a technical assistance program at the Maryland State Department of Education to help connect private providers with various local resources for business development, like local chambers of commerce and workforce development boards. HB 1441 also extends provider grants and the Maryland EXCELS program an extra two years each to support the expansion and start-up of providers.

Counties applaud these reasonable and needed adjustments to ensure successful expansion of early childhood education and to best serve all Maryland's three- and four-year-olds. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS HB 1441** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

- MSCCA Testimony - HB 1441 senate final.pdf

Uploaded by: Christina Peusch

Position: FAV



**Caring For Maryland's Most
Important Natural Resource™**

Maryland State Child Care Association

2810 Carrollton Road
Annapolis, Md. 21403
Phone: (410) 820-9196
Email: info@mscca.org
www.mscca.org

The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. MSCCA has over 5500 members working in the field of child care/early childhood education. We believe children are our most important natural resource and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.

Testimony: HB 1441 Early Childhood Education – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs– Alterations

Submitted to: Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

March 27, 2024

MSCCA enthusiastically supports HB 1441.

The *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* is investing in our youngest citizens. A Mixed-Delivery Pre-K system, involving both public schools and private community-based childcare providers, will be needed to accommodate the number of pre-kindergarten students. In order to attain the goals set by the *Blueprint* for mixed delivery, it is imperative that the state work to decrease the numerous barriers for private providers to achieve the current codified requirements, including the teacher qualifications of state prek-3 certification.

The Accountability and Implementation Board authored a report in December 2023 that offers recommendations related to Pillar 1 and acknowledges some of the barriers for a true mixed delivery system for prekindergarten in Maryland—requiring that all providers, both public and private, meet certain standards to receive public funding.

The AIB, MSDE and the sponsor understand and support the need to create alternative pathways to be inclusive of community-based providers/programs along with addressing the critical workforce shortages. HB1441 creates the necessary pathways and supports to achieve the goals of the Blueprint Pillar 1, mixed delivery of public Pre-K. The bill takes steps to overcome barriers and inequities without sacrificing quality or closing businesses to participate, which hurts parents who need care for birth to five in Maryland. Child care providers cannot afford to lose their three and four year olds to public schools without unintended consequences for families. Unfortunately, very few child care programs can equitably participate in the expansion of public Pre-K. Unintended consequences include less access and affordability for infant and toddler care, more child care providers closing businesses and more unlicensed/illegal child care, which leads to poor outcomes for children.

In order to offer a Pre-Kindergarten program currently in law, childcare providers must first be certified through the state of Maryland by a county board. Presently, both Teacher Preparation Programs and Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs require P-3 certification or a bachelor's degree and pursuing certification, which includes a teacher residency. The General Assembly passed HB 1219 last year that set the stage for the Department to create alternative pathways to certification. HB1441 is the logical next step to implementing Maryland Educator Shortage Act by creating a career ladder with numerous alternative pathways, competencies, professional development, and measurements of quality.

MSDE shows that the childcare sector already meets numerous requirements for Pillar 1. Maryland EXCELS reports there are more than 1,000 level 3,4, and 5 programs participating - plenty to meet the mixed delivery criteria necessary in many jurisdictions. Additionally, many child care/early childhood teachers have degrees, CDA, are climbing the state Credentialing ladder or are pursuing higher education and are still not eligible to teach the children they are already teaching. The structure of the Pre-K competitive grants does not allow the experienced, degreed, credentialed early childhood teachers in private settings to continue or compete. The diverse, primarily women of color child care providers need to compete for public prek to be the role models for the children they serve.

Additionally, the child care business model is not sustainable without preschoolers. Kindergarten Readiness data shows child care provides successful, quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood experiences and we want the opportunity to meet the mixed delivery goals in the *Blueprint*, however cannot if equitable bridges are not built.

HB 1441 is such a bridge and aligns with the AIB December report/recommendations for LEA's support and alternative pathways to reduce barriers to Pillar 1 mixed delivery:

1. Creates a career ladder for early childhood of teacher with numerous alternative pathways for an eligible pre-k provider. All careers, especially teaching, benefit from experience in the field and this bill supports experience and knowledge in early childhood specifically.
2. Sets state requirements that at least 50% of the pre-k slots provided in each county be provided by private providers by the 2028-2029 school year.
3. Requires MSDE to develop a model MOU for county boards to use with the department, each eligible private provider participating in publicly funded pre-k in the county, and other applicable government agencies. The model MOU must now include important components for success including:
A method for the county Board to distribute a list of eligible public and private providers in the area to interested parents and the facilitation of a peer-to-peer meetings for Pre-K providers to share best practices. Building a bridge for all Pre-K providers to engage in these communities of practices is also a critical component of success for mixed delivery.

Incorporates the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund – Alterations language in HB 1441. Passage of this legislation will open necessary, equitable opportunities for early childhood educators. Increasing the service hours to work in an approved child care setting for at least 20 hours per week will make a positive impact on the qualified workforce and address some of the workforce shortages. The bill also ensures an equity lens in offering native language or bilingual coursework in early childhood education or a related field. Ensuring Maryland's educators can access education in their most confident language is a big step forward for equity, language justice, ensuring meaningful experiences for early childhood educators and families.

Alignment of AIB recommendations supports creating centralized and regional hub models to expand participation for the community based businesses, including child care centers and family child care in Maryland through hubs recommended by the AIB. This bill supports shared services and partnerships including, grant writing support, shared business functions, better information sharing and communication strategies, resources, templates for MOU's, business services, coordination of health department services, all the while reducing barriers and strengthening partnerships in concrete ways. The important representation on the Hub model will engage experts and partners necessary for successful collaboration to support the list of recommendations in the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) for improving implementation of the Blueprint Pillar 1.

4. HB 1441 also extends the Child Care Incentive Grant Program through 2032 and extends the Maryland Child Care Credential Program through 2026. All critical programs to support community-based child care programs in achieving the highest quality in professional development and Maryland EXCELS ratings.

We can achieve the ultimate goals of Pillar 1 and mixed delivery by supporting HB 1441. Parents do not work 6.5 hours per day. Early childhood programs have consistently and successfully provided full day care and education to young children preparing them for next steps. HB 1441 raises the bar and provides pathways, equity and support needed to ensure quality child care and early childhood education can be viable options for families.

MSCCA requests a favorable report.

Testimony - HB 1441 - Alternative Pathways Certifi

Uploaded by: Christopher Cano

Position: FAV



HB 1441, Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Pre-K Programs - Alterations
Favorable
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 27, 2024

Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate EEE Committee:

We at SEIU Local 500 represent childcare providers throughout the state of Maryland. Many of whom wish to be a part of helping our state reach its early childhood education goals set forth in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Many of our members have enrolled in education programs to guide them towards being certified pre-k teachers. Unfortunately, the educational benchmarks for teacher certification typically include internships and other classroom based attendance that would require our childcare providers to close their doors while attempting to meet the rigid requirements of their education programs. Closing down childcare centers for upwards of an entire year for the sake of educational benchmarks does not help meet the goals of the Blueprint.

Child care providers cannot afford to lose their three and four year olds to public schools, however not all can equitably participate in the expansion of public pre-k. More unintended consequences include less access and affordability for infant and toddler care, more child care providers closing businesses and more unlicensed/illegal child care which leads to poor outcomes for children.

In order to offer a Pre-Kindergarten program currently in law, childcare providers must first be certified through the state of Maryland by a county board. Presently, both Teacher Preparation Programs and Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs require P-3 certification or a bachelor's degree and pursuing certification which includes a teacher residency. The General Assembly passed a bill last year that set the stage for the Department to create alternative pathways to certification. HB1441 is the logical next step to this by allowing for Associates Degrees in Early Childhood Education to also qualify a provider to receive a teaching certificate in Early Childhood Education, requires Local Education Agencies and MSDE to create resources to help private providers to participate in the mixed-delivery system, and creates a pathway to credit private providers for prior experience.

HB 1441 serves to offer an alternative pathway to teacher certification for those childcare providers seeking to become pre-k teachers. Again, this legislation goes a long way to meet the needs of this state's early childhood education goals set forth in the Blueprint.

We ask for your support and a favorable report.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA
Director of Political and Legislative Affairs
SEIU Local 500

HB 1441 DBCC EO Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Evelyn Owens

Position: FAV

Good Morning,

My name is Evelyn Owens Williams. As an early childhood educator at Downtown Baltimore Child Care for over 35 years, I've taught and cared for hundreds of children. Downtown Baltimore Child Care is known throughout the region as an example of what's possible in a high-quality child care environment. We are the place that "gets it right" for children, families, and teachers. All of our centers are accredited, and have achieved the highest possible quality ratings from MSDE. DBCC currently employs three master's level pre-k teachers, myself included. Yet, our centers are not currently eligible for the pre-k expansion grants because of the teacher certification requirement.

As someone who has devoted my life to early childhood education in the private sector, I have never pursued an MSDE teaching license, but I have demonstrated my ability to foster growth in children. To get certified at this stage in my career would require me to complete an approved MSDE program that requires field experience or "student teaching". In other words, to become certified to do the job I have

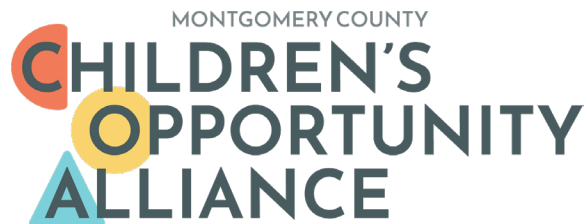
already been excelling at for decades, I would need to leave my job. This requirement is inequitable, unnecessary, and places an undue burden on quality early childhood educators and programs.

The opportunity for mixed-delivery is technically here, but the gates are still closed and keeping out experienced and talented teachers. DBCC is in favor of HB 1441 because it recognizes qualified child care providers and expands Maryland's ability to serve children and families.

COA_written testimony_HB 1441 3.27.24.pdf

Uploaded by: Laura Jahromi

Position: FAV



March 27, 2024

Testimony Concerning House Bill 1441 – Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations

The Montgomery County [Children's Opportunity Alliance](#) is a newly locally legislated Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity that brings community together to create a more equitable, accessible, high-quality, and sustainable early childhood system that narrows disparities and puts young children on a path to reach their greatest potential.

We urge you to support HB1441 – Early Childhood Education – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs – Alterations. The *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* is a laudable and transformative legislation that shows true investment in our youngest citizens through Pillar 1. We believe that a mixed-delivery Pre-K system, that involves both public schools and private community-based child care providers, is needed to make high quality early childhood education available to the 3 and 4 year olds who need it the most.

The amendments added in the House have made this current draft an incredibly strong and valuable piece of legislation that has the potential to set implementation of the Pre-K mixed delivery system on a more successful course. It takes steps to overcome barriers without sacrificing quality. It accomplishes this by:

- Providing alternative pathways to certification for private pre-kindergarten providers;
- Creating support systems to help community-based prekindergarten providers successfully establish public pre-kindergarten programs while ensuring diversity, community outreach, and business support; and
- Investing in current programs that support the diverse and multicultural child care and prekindergarten workforce in our state.

Montgomery County has the most Pre-K seats in community-based settings across the state. This year we have 208 seats in 6 child care centers and 7 family child care homes (through the Family Child Care Alliance of MD). In order to reach the goals of serving all Tier 1 three- and four-year-olds and all Tier 2 four-year-olds while meeting the 50/50 ratio goal, we estimate that there will need to be over 6,600 seats. We have a long way to go to be able to meet this goal.

However, the model as it exists today for private community-based providers to apply to the Maryland State Department of Education to receive Pre-K grants does not currently work for the majority of private providers in our community. The Children's Opportunity Alliance interviewed child care center directors across the county to hear their perceptions about this opportunity.



Through our interview, we heard that the largest barriers for providers to be eligible and participate include:

- the requirements for teacher education are unrealistic and do not reflect the current workforce
- the administrative burden of applying for and managing a state grant
- the reimbursement rate does not cover the true cost of providing quality care

We need to make alterations to these requirements if we truly want private community-based providers to be eligible for the Pre-K grants. And we need the private community-based providers to get these grants if we truly want to have enough Pre-K seats to meet the needs of working families in our community.

Inequitable access to early care and education impacts the entire community – parents, employers, providers. Improving access to high-quality early education makes a significant impact on the lives of young children, both short and long term, with improved outcomes in education, physical and mental health, employment, and public safety. By addressing the opportunity gap that currently exists for young children from low-income families, we can create a more equitable early childhood system that will have lasting intergenerational benefits.

Submitted on behalf of the Children's Opportunity Alliance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Jahromi". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Laura Jahromi, Manager, Strategic Initiatives
The Montgomery County Children's Opportunity Alliance
P.O. Box 287, Rockville, MD 20848
301-450-1871
laura@mocochildren.org

HB 1441_MFN_Weeldreyer_PreK - X-OVER.pdf

Uploaded by: Laura Weeldreyer

Position: FAV



Testimony Concerning HB 1441
“Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations”
Submitted to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 27, 2024

Position: Favorable

Maryland Family Network (MFN) strongly supports HB 1441, which would alter the pre-kindergarten teacher credentials required under the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future and put necessary supports in place—such as professional development and coordinating hubs—to enhance the effective and successful expansion of public pre-kindergarten.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and early childhood education as well as other supports for children and families in Maryland. We have been active in state and federal debates on child care policy and are strongly committed to ensuring that children, along with their parents, have access to high-quality, affordable programs and educational opportunities.

A longstanding goal of MFN and its allies, incorporated into the Blueprint for Maryland’s future—seeks to ensure that pre-K is offered through a system of “mixed delivery”—the principle that publicly funded pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds should be offered not solely in public schools. High-quality providers already established in their communities, such as child care programs, can receive public funds to educate pre-K students, provided that the quality of the education is the equivalent of what those pupils would receive in a public school classroom.

MFN appreciates steps taken to make certain that the establishment of competency-based certification criteria does not diminish quality standards, but rather gives providers and the State new and necessary flexibility in determining that the standards are met. Doing so will help create a more diverse workforce and help achieve quality programming for all children. The establishment of an early childhood career ladder will vouchsafe quality while reducing barriers to private providers participation in the delivery of public pre-K.

We strongly urge a favorable report for HB 1441.



XHB1441_MSEA_Lamb_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Lauren Lamb

Position: FAV

FAVORABLE
House Bill 1441
Early Childhood Education – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs -
Alterations

Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
March 27, 2024

Lauren Lamb
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association strongly supports House Bill 1441, which would adjust qualifications for public and private prekindergarten providers. It also addresses resources and requirements for the implementation of mixed-delivery prekindergarten to meet the goals of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

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).

Early childhood education addresses a uniquely impactful period in a child's academic career. We know from an extensive body of research that children's learning before and during prekindergarten through 3rd grade have profound long-term effects on their literacy, social, and emotional development.^{1 2} As we work toward the Blueprint's vision of high-quality prekindergarten for all children in our state, we are committed to expanding pathways and

¹ Universal pre-K: The long-term benefits that exceed short-term costs. Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy (2022).

<https://mccourt.georgetown.edu/news/universal-pre-k-long-term-benefits-exceed-short-term-costs/>

² Effectiveness of Early Literacy Instruction: Summary of 20 Years of Research. Institute of Education Sciences (2021). https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southeast/pdf/REL_2021084.pdf



identifying strategies to recruit and retain early childhood educators.

We ardently support the measures in this bill that would make Pre-K paraeducators in public programs who have at least 15 years of experience exempt from the requirement to hold a Child Development Associate certificate or associate's degree by SY 2027-2028. Career paraeducators with a track record of success should not be subject to new requirements to keep their jobs, and this exemption is designed to recognize the valuable expertise of longtime early childhood educators.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1441.

HB1441 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Kovacs

Position: FAV



March 27, 2024

SUPPORT – HB1441 - Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the Anne Arundel Early Childhood Childcare Taskforce, I am writing in support of HB1441- Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations. The Early Childhood Childcare Taskforce is a group of stakeholders who work within the early childhood education field including government agencies, childcare providers, and nonprofits. Anne Arundel County Executive Stuart Pittman signed the executive order in February 2024 to create the taskforce, showing Anne Arundel's commitment to solving issues related to the childcare industry. The state needs the child care community to successfully and efficiently implement universal pre-kindergarten and must take steps to address critical workforce shortages.

HB1441 takes vital steps to address barriers private providers are currently facing and will result in more pre-kindergarten teachers and more pre-kindergarten slots in every district in Maryland. HB1441 takes proactive steps to ensure the successful implementation of the mixed-delivery system by:

- Providing alternative pathways to certification for private pre-kindergarten providers;
- Creating support systems to help community-based prekindergarten providers successfully establish public pre-kindergarten programs while ensuring diversity, community outreach, and business support; and
- Investing in current programs that support the diverse and multicultural child care and prekindergarten workforce in our state.

The childcare business model is not sustainable without preschoolers. If the measures in HB1441 are not enacted, unintended consequences will include less access and affordability for infant and toddler care, more child care providers closing businesses, and more unlicensed/illegal child care which leads to poor outcomes for children. Providers in Anne Arundel County has expressed concern over the unintended consequences of teacher and classroom regulations for the Blueprint.

We urge you to support HB1441 - Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations to overcome barriers and inequities without sacrificing quality or closing businesses by creating alternative pathways to be inclusive of community-based providers/programs, addressing the critical workforce shortages

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P M Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Pamela M. Brown, PhD
Chair

Testimony in support of crossover bill HB1441.pdf

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

CROSSOVER BILL HB1441_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
3/28/2024

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON CROSSOVER BILL HB1441 – FAVORABLE
Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs – Alterations

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of CROSSOVER BILL HB1441, Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations

This bill is an attempt to add to the Blueprint for Education a set of new pathways to achieving the prekindergarten component of that blueprint. As the Blueprint implementation phase proceeds forward-thinking on space for the program, staffing of the program, and educator progression and career advancement are refinements we can and should make in pursuit of the blueprint goals.

This bill is an acknowledgement that the progress on the Blueprint for Education must take into account the roadblocks and challenges to implementation through creative thinking and problem solving..

This bill will apply those lessons learned to better position Maryland in Blueprint implementation and more effective personnel applicability. The future of making the Blueprint work effectively requires adaptability of lessons learned to conducting that implementation.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass CROSSOVER BILL HB1441.

Written Testimony in Support of HB 1441, Opposite

Uploaded by: Stephanie Schaefer

Position: FAV



Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children

Testimony in Support of HB 1441
“Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations”
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee / Budget and Tax Committee
March 27, 2024

Position: Support

The Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC) supports HB 1441, which would make alterations to the provision of publicly-funded pre-K in community-based child care programs, and also take valuable steps to better support the early childhood workforce and remove barriers to obtaining additional training, credentials, and higher education opportunities.

MDAEYC is a professional association of 2,000 early childhood educators, allied professionals, and families. We promote high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood education practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children.

Alignment with the Early Childhood Education field’s call to elevate early childhood education as a profession. We appreciate HB 1441’s provisions which provide flexibility and phased approaches in addressing workforce challenges. The bill's provisions resonate with the vision outlined in the *Unifying Framework For the Early Childhood Profession*, a national movement to elevate the profession, emphasizing the importance of a diverse, well-prepared, and well-compensated early childhood education workforce across all states and settings.¹

Supporting early childhood educators’s preparation, qualifications, and increased compensation to teach in publicly-funded Pre-K classrooms: Early Childhood Career Ladder. HB 1441 creates an Early Childhood Career Ladder which establishes multiple pathways for educators to meet the education and certification requirements to be eligible as Pre-K teachers in private programs.

- In addition to the more traditional pathways to certification, we support the inclusion of the educator pathway based on 10 years experience, a CLASS assessment of classroom quality, and a requirement to earn an associate’s degree by 2030. This is an important addition to the pathways for educators.
- This competency-based credentialing of early childhood educators is one valuable way to give teachers professional credit for the skills and abilities that they can demonstrate. It is more feasible for the current child care workforce to achieve, and it recognizes the value of experience as an educator while also maintaining a standard of teacher qualification based on an observation of the quality of education and care the teacher provides.

¹ [Unifying Framework Executive Summary](https://powertotheprofession.org/) retrieved from <https://powertotheprofession.org/>

- The Career Ladder provision references increased compensation for educators who advance in their education, credentials, and preparation. We support raising teacher qualifications, but these must be accompanied by increased compensation for teachers with enhanced qualifications. Please clarify how the ladder itself compensates educators, and how increased compensation is provided as an educator moves to different levels.

Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund. We support the bill's provision which prioritizes scholarship funding for students attending colleges or universities that offer native language or bilingual course work in early childhood education or a related field.

- As the professional requirements for child care providers increase, we support efforts to ensure that all providers have equitable opportunities to pursue higher education and advance professionally.
- Access to education in one's native language helps college students be successful in their degree programs. Further, child care providers with additional education and training in early childhood education can increase their knowledge and skills in caring for children, which benefits the children and families they serve as well.

Pre-kindergarten Provider Hubs. We support the creation of Hubs to provide support to private Pre-K educators through professional development and technical assistance.

Waivers on meeting mixed delivery standards. It is important that County Boards are held accountable to meeting the requirements for mixed delivery of Pre-K under the Blueprint law. We can understand the decision to create a slower phase-in of mixed delivery system benchmarks for Pre-K provision in private community based programs. We support the provision requiring Counties to demonstrate Good Faith Effort in implementing mixed delivery and partnering with community-based programs

In conclusion, House Bill 1441 represents a significant step forward in strengthening our state's prekindergarten programs while aligning with broader efforts to raise qualifications and compensation in the early childhood education profession. By addressing workforce challenges and aligning qualifications with necessary competencies, we can ensure that every child in Maryland has access to high-quality early childhood education that lays the foundation for lifelong success.

For these reasons, MDAEYC respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 1441.

If you have any questions, please contact: Stephanie Schaefer, PhD. Program Coordinator, at stephanie.schaefer@mdaeyc.org or 240-441-3280.

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_HB1441.pdf

Uploaded by: Will Thorne

Position: FAV

JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive



JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR
Legislative Officer

WILLIAM J. THORNE
Legislative Associate

BILL NO.: **HB 1441**

TITLE: Early Childhood Education – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs – Alterations

SPONSOR: Chairwoman Atterbear

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 27, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1441 – Early Childhood Education – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten programs – Alterations. Modest alterations to teacher certification and flexibility for expanding Pre-Kindergarten will help counties meet their obligations under the State’s Blueprint.

Baltimore County supports Maryland’s Blueprint for Education and its goals to enhance educational spending and expand educational resources for children. We also believe that additional flexibility in meeting some of the requirements within the Blueprint would enable each local school system the ability to meet their needs in the most efficient way for that system. Providing modest flexibility in teacher certifications, as well as additional resources directed to training young teachers, will greatly help meet the demands of expanded prekindergarten.

With additional flexibility, counties can creatively utilize additional spaces for prekindergarten, allowing us to focus limited resources on hiring and training teachers, rather than building expensive capital projects.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 1441 from the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

HB 1441 (2)- Early Childhood Education - Publicly

Uploaded by: Dawana Sterrette

Position: FWA

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
Support with Amendments
House Bill 1441 – Early Childhood Education
Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs – Alterations**

March 27, 2024

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports with amendments House Bill 1441. The Board incorporates by reference amendments provided by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education and the Public School Superintendent's Association, but also would like to commend the sponsor for recognizing that there are many concerns about the public/private provider requirements in the current law.

The Board shares with the sponsor is that the current law requires that prekindergarten teaching assistants must have hold a Child Development Associate certificate or an Associate's degree by June 30, 2027 or show progress toward the CDA or AA. At present, approximately 75% of City School's paraprofessionals do not meet the qualification of having a CDA or AA, although more than 60% have at least 15 years' experience. In order to ensure individuals with significant experience successfully working in these roles are not displaced from their positions if they are unable to meet these new requirements, the sponsor has modified the Blueprint law to include alternative approaches for pre-K teaching assistants, which the Board agrees with wholeheartedly.

However, there still is some concern about removing the language that private providers must be given 50% of pre-k students. Baltimore City Schools has been serving the majority of 4 year olds in the City, well before the passage of the Blueprint. The language that has been amended on requires us to enter into an MOU and show a good faith effort to provide a mixed delivery system is troubling and would require that City Schools remove eligible prek students from open City Schools seats to move to a private provider setting. Removing eligible public school students to move to a private provider setting seems to be unreasonable. We would suggest that the original language in the bill stand and read:

7-1A-03

It is the goal of the State that at least 50% of the prekindergarten slots provided in each county be provided by eligible private providers beginning in the 2027-2028 school year and is not a mandatory requirement and should not require removing existing public students in public school prekindergarten seats to fulfill the goal.

Baltimore City School students in prek outperform the State. Below is an article from the newspaper demonstrating how well our prek program is supporting students.

STUDENTS ATTENDING CITY SCHOOLS PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS OUTPERFORM THE STATE OVERALL

City Schools

MAR 08, 2024

<https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/article/1498843>

BALTIMORE – Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) is outperforming Maryland overall in kindergarten readiness, according to the latest results from state education officials.

District leaders attribute that success to the system’s investments in early learning.

Forty-six percent of City Schools students who attended a [City School’ PreK or Judy Center](#) demonstrated readiness on the state’s Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in the 2023-24 school year compared to 44 percent for Maryland overall.

City Schools’ Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, White, economically disadvantaged, and Multilingual learner students all outperformed the state in the same categories.

Students with disabilities in City Schools performed at the same level as their peers in the state. These gains occurred while Baltimore City experienced a sharp increase in the number of pre-kindergarten students and students that require specialized services.

Students attending a City Schools Pre-K or Judy Center also had higher rates of readiness than students attending other prior care settings like private care or in-home options. The results show that pre-kindergarten students in Baltimore City are better prepared for kindergarten than at any time since the onset of the COVID pandemic in 2020. These positive results are an indication that pre-K-focused learning programs are paying dividends for students.

“We know that young people who enter kindergarten at or above grade level will be more equipped to experience success throughout their educational careers. These latest results verify that our long-term and consistent investments in the education of our youngest learners are continuing to pay off, as larger numbers of our youngest learners are ready to thrive from day one,” said [Sonja Brookins Santelises, chief executive officer of City Schools](#). “As importantly, our pre-kindergarten students are performing better than their peers across Maryland. We are committed to even higher levels of performance in the future.”

The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) is part of Maryland's broader Ready for Kindergarten (R4K) program. The KRA is administered to all kindergarten students in the first quarter of a school year. It allows teachers to measure each child's school readiness across multiple domains.

Key takeaways include:

- **Locally, our Judy Centers and pre-kindergarten programs continue to be the best way to prepare students for kindergarten.**
- **Among KRA test takers that attended City Schools’ programs the prior year, all student groups have equal or higher readiness as the same groups at the state level.**

- **Black/African American students** increased readiness by 6 percentage points, from 40 percent to 46 percent, surpassing the state which is at 40 percent.
- **Hispanic/Latino students** increased readiness by 5 percentage points, from 27 percent to 32 percent, surpassing the state's readiness of 24 percent.
- **White students** increased readiness by 9 percentage points, from 63 percent to 72 percent, outperforming the state's readiness of 59 percent.
- **Economically disadvantaged students** increased readiness by 6 percentage points, from 36 percent to 42 percent, outperforming the state's readiness by 10 percentage points.
- **Multilingual learner students** increased readiness by 9 percentage points, from 15 percent to 24 percent, doubling the state's readiness of 12 percentage points.
- **Students with disabilities** increased readiness by 7 percentage points, from 11 percent to 18 percent, equaling the state's readiness of 18 percent.

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HB 1441 - MSDE - State Board - AIB SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Dr. Carey Wright

Position: FWA



TO: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

BILL: House Bill 1441 – Early Childhood Education – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations

DATE: March 27, 2024

POSITION: Support with Amendments

Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) would like to express our support for **HB 1441**, with amendments. Overall, we support the bill’s intent to establish a career ladder framework for early childhood educators, facilitating various pathways for them to advance to lead Pre-K teacher roles by recognizing their prior learning and experience.

Additionally, we endorse the bill's provisions for extending funding for crucial early childhood workforce grants such as the Maryland Child Care Credential and the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund. Furthermore, the legislation proposes an extension of the Pre-K Expansion Grant to FY 2029, which would facilitate the establishment of new seats in both private provider and public school settings as well as support the transition of providers to the Pre-K formula funding in the subsequent year. We also support the establishment of "hubs" to assist local education agencies in partnering with private providers. AIB and MSDE recommended hubs in the 2023 Joint Chairmen's Report recommendations. These hubs are intended to coordinate programming and services effectively among private providers and between private providers and LEAs to expand access to high-quality, full-day Pre-K programs.

MSDE and AIB have concerns about a provision in the bill that would allow teaching assistants to meet the high quality staffing requirement without earning a Child Development Associate (CDA). This requirement takes effect in 2027, which gives current staff several years to earn a CDA. A CDA can be completed in less than a year and State funds are available to cover the cost of the CDA. We respectfully request that the committee not adopt this provision.

MSDE and the AIB request that the committee consider this information as it deliberates on **HB 1441**. Please contact Rachel Hise, Executive Director of the AIB, at rachel.hise@maryland.gov or at 410-991-7525, or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov or at 443-915-6094, if you would like any additional information.

MD Catholic Conference_HB 1441_FWA SENATE CROSS.pd

Uploaded by: Garrett O'Day

Position: FWA



March 27, 2024

HB 1441

Education – Blueprint for Maryland’s Future – Alterations

**Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee**

Position: INFORMATION w/ Amendment

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this informational testimony with amendments to House Bill 1441. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state’s second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

As written, House Bill 1441 bolsters the prekindergarten workforce, provides alternative pathways to certification, establishes support systems for community-based providers, and invests in programs that nurture our diverse childcare workforce. House Bill 1441 proactively insures the success of a mixed-delivery system of prekindergarten by utilizing Maryland’s vast resources for high-quality prekindergarten in its private provider network and removing barriers faced by private providers. These measures will result in more prekindergarten teachers and substantial increases in prekindergarten slots across every district in Maryland.

A major component of the Blueprint legislation, which was supported by the Conference, provides that 50% of prekindergarten expansion slots be provided through private prekindergarten providers. This legislation as amended by the House helps to ensure that crucial provision is retained, for which we are thankful.

However, a major barrier that prevents a dearth of very high-quality prekindergarten programs from applying for expansion sites is the prohibition against anything “explicitly religious” in the Blueprint prekindergarten provisions. This is often not because schools intend to proselytize, but because they are afraid that incidental or engrained elements of their programs will be questioned or compromised.

The goal is to provide high-quality education and if the state wants to spur increased involvement from private providers, those provisions should be struck from the law. **Thus, we respectfully request an amendment to the same effect, as listed below. Based on recent case law precedent, such an amendment would be fully constitutional, alleviate any challenges**

to the unconstitutionality of the current prohibitive provisions, and would open up a number of high-quality expansion site applicants.

Nonpublic school prekindergarten providers have received mixed- delivery prekindergarten expansion grant sites in the first round of expansion in 2022, winning competitive grant bids for programs to provide prekindergarten to four-year-old children whose family income is 300% of the federal poverty level (FPL) or lower. Nonpublic providers have the capacity to offer high quality seats at our programs and are enthused to continue to partner with the state of Maryland in advancing the educational vision of the Kirwan Commission through mixed-delivery prekindergarten expansions.

These sites include Catholic schools who are partnering with the State of Maryland to provide high-quality prekindergarten to low-income students. Catholic providers have long participated in and supported prekindergarten expansion in Maryland. All three of (arch)dioceses serving Maryland have a strong commitment to education. Within the State of Maryland, there are approximately 120 prekindergarten programs in Catholic schools or parishes, in addition to Headstart programs. Nearly all are accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by MSDE and a vast majority of them employ state-certified prekindergarten teachers. However, some added flexibility for expansion sites would certainly accelerate Maryland's ambitions prekindergarten expansion goals.

A strong prekindergarten education has been proven to greatly enhance a child's educational trajectory. Like early childhood care, it is also an essential component to supporting strong, economically secure families. Prekindergarten availability also helps to empower working parents with workplace access, an imperative part of combating poverty.

We respectfully urge the following amendments to House Bill 1441:

Amendments to House Bill 1441

Amendment No. 1

On the reprint, strike in the entirety from page 10, line 27 all the way through page 11, line 5.

HB 1441.PreK reforms SENATE.pdf

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FWA

BILL: House Bill 1441
TITLE: Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations
DATE: March 27, 2024
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports House Bill 1441 because it would extend full funding for the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program through FY 2029, and make other needed improvements to the very complex implementation of the statewide expansion of full-day prekindergarten mandated by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future law.

The Blueprint establishes an incredibly ambitious expansion of publicly funded full-day prekindergarten. The program is intended, once fully implemented, to provide access for all three and four year old children from families with incomes of 300% or less of the federal poverty level (FPL). Specifically, the program guarantees the availability of slots in public schools or private facilities at no cost for parents and guardians of three and four year olds from households with incomes up to 300% of the federal poverty level (FPL) (\$77,460 for a family of three in 2024) and for four-year-olds from families with incomes between 300% and 600% FPL using a sliding scale. However, the availability of slots for eligible children is a function of the availability of slots in public and private programs that meet eligibility criteria and thereby qualify for approval and funding.

In order to accomplish this statewide expansion of public education, by two grade levels, the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education adopted a novel recommendation, enacted in the Blueprint, to have private providers of early education enroll publicly funded prekindergarten students. In fact, the Blueprint mandates that public school systems secure the services of local private providers to serve no less than 50% of eligible students. To date, the engagement with and participation of these private providers has yielded nowhere near this 50% mandated objective. To be clear, the State is not mandated to ensure this 50% share, only local school systems are. House bill 1441 would address these implementation challenges by establishing incremental 10% rates of growth in the private provision of slots. MABE requests an amendment to the bill, and Blueprint law, to reasonably reflect the essential partnership between the State, private providers, and local school systems. On page 6, in line 25, after "shall" insert **"MAKE REASONABLE EFFORTS TO"**. In this context, MABE also objects to the bill provision in lines 19-22 of page 7. The challenges in attracting private providers to participate in the publicly funded prekindergarten expansion program are many and varied, but not due to a local school system "not fully embracing the mixed delivery system." By contrast, MABE appreciates the bill's career ladder for private providers as an example of state action to facilitate private participation in the state program.

The prekindergarten expansion envisioned by the Blueprint is an enormous undertaking involving short- and long-term planning to address staffing full-day programs with highly qualified teachers and aides, and planning, designing and constructing the major renovations and new prekindergarten classrooms and facilities. State level programs and procedures necessary for the success of these efforts are lagging, at best. House Bill 1441 is intended to help ensure that all students can benefit from these efforts with the support of more clearly defined standards and sufficient state and local funding.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 1441, with the amendments described above.

HB 1441 - State Board - AIB SUPPORT .docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Joshua Michael

Position: FWA

TO: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

BILL: House Bill 1441 – Early Childhood Education – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations

DATE: March 27, 2024

POSITION: Support with Amendments

Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) would like to express our support for **HB 1441**, with amendments. Overall, we support the bill's intent to establish a career ladder framework for early childhood educators, facilitating various pathways for them to advance to lead Pre-K teacher roles by recognizing their prior learning and experience.

Additionally, we endorse the bill's provisions for extending funding for crucial early childhood workforce grants such as the Maryland Child Care Credential and the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund. Furthermore, the legislation proposes an extension of the Pre-K Expansion Grant to FY 2029, which would facilitate the establishment of new seats in both private provider and public school settings as well as support the transition of providers to the Pre-K formula funding in the subsequent year. We also support the establishment of "hubs" to assist local education agencies in partnering with private providers. AIB and MSDE recommended hubs in the 2023 Joint Chairmen's Report recommendations. These hubs are intended to coordinate programming and services effectively among private providers and between private providers and LEAs to expand access to high-quality, full-day Pre-K programs.

MSDE and AIB have concerns about a provision in the bill that would allow teaching assistants to meet the high quality staffing requirement without earning a Child Development Associate (CDA). This requirement takes effect in 2027, which gives current staff several years to earn a CDA. A CDA can be completed in less than a year and State funds are available to cover the cost of the CDA. We respectfully request that the committee not adopt this provision.

MSDE and the AIB request that the committee consider this information as it deliberates on **HB 1441**. Please contact Rachel Hise, Executive Director of the AIB, at rachel.hise@maryland.gov or at 410-991-7525, or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov or at 443-915-6094, if you would like any additional information.

HB 1441 xover - PreK - EEE.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Pat Fannon

Position: FWA

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BILL: HB 1441

TITLE: Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations

DATE: March 27, 2024

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four Maryland local school superintendents, **supports** House Bill 1441 with **amendments**.

This bill proposes numerous changes related to publicly funded prekindergarten programs, but most importantly, it would extend funding for the very successful Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program through FY 2029.

One of the bedrocks of The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is the expansion of public and private prekindergarten programs. In fact, the expansion of seats, and improvements in Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) scores have been one of the most celebrated early victories in many school systems.

PSSAM deeply appreciates the sponsor's comprehensive efforts to address many of the implementation challenges in Pillar I - Early Childhood. We believe this legislation is greatly improved but we hope the committee will consider the following suggested amendments.

In order to accomplish ambitious prekindergarten goals, the Blueprint established a complex, yet innovative mixed delivery model employing both public and private prekindergarten providers. The goal is a 50/50 system, with the local school systems responsible for recruiting private providers. To date, the participation of private providers has been slow to materialize, with many

of the barriers to participation beyond the control of LEAs. It is important to note that LEAs are not the credentialing authority for private providers, and have very little, to no control over the financial viability or operations of these private businesses.

In an effort to address this slow rate of participation, HB 1441 establishes mandated rates of 10% per year in the growth of private PreK seats. We strongly request an amendment to reasonably reflect the essential partnership between the State, private providers, and local school systems in meeting this goal. Therefore, we ask the committee to consider the following language: on page 6, in line 25, after “shall,” insert “**MAKE REASONABLE EFFORTS TO**”.

In keeping with this sentiment of partnership, we ask that the following language be struck: lines 19-22 of page 7, which would indicate to the casual, or even educated observer, that the inability to attract private providers to this model is the result of local school systems “not fully embracing the mixed delivery system.”

We also request that the committee strongly consider removing the proposal for MSDE to develop a career ladder for private PreK providers and their employees. LEAs have been struggling with the development and negotiations of the career ladder mandated in the Blueprint for the last two and a half years. While this has been an extensive and complicated implementation effort, we are well situated to work with our union partners. There is no such infrastructure for the development of a career ladder system for the private sector, and we are deeply concerned about the diversion of limited staffing and financial resources from MSDE to assist the private sector in such a significant undertaking.

We appreciate the Committee’s consideration of our recommendations and suggestions, and request a **favorable with amendments** report.