



Bill No: Senate Bill 462

**State Board of Education – Membership – Early Childhood Development Professional
February 21, 2025**

Position: Favorable

**Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Education, Energy and the
Environment,**

I am honored to submit this written testimony in support of Senate Bill 462, which seeks to enhance the membership of the Maryland State Board of Education by including an early childhood development professional.

My name is Ruby Daniels, President of the Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA), a second-year independent Pre-K Expansion Grantee, and Chair of the Pillar 1 Advisory Committee to the Accountability and Implementation Board, I have witnessed firsthand the critical role early childhood education (ECE) plays in shaping Maryland's educational landscape. Including a representative from the early childhood sector on the State Board of Education is a necessary and logical step toward ensuring that the needs of our youngest learners and their educators are fully recognized in policy decisions.

The Value of Including a Child Care Provider in the State Board of Education

The early years of a child's education are **foundational, setting the trajectory for future academic success and lifelong learning**. Maryland has made significant strides in expanding access to high-quality early childhood education through initiatives such as the Pre-K Expansion Grant and Blueprint for Maryland's Future. However, the governance and decision-making structures overseeing K-12 education often lack direct representation from professionals specializing in early childhood development. Senate Bill 462 corrects this oversight by ensuring that an experienced early childhood development professional, with expertise in child care operations, curriculum, and early learning standards, has a seat at the table.

As a leader in Maryland's early childhood education sector, I can attest to the value of incorporating perspectives from licensed child care providers who operate both small- and large-scale programs. Family child care and center-based providers serve thousands of children across Maryland, often bridging gaps in access for working families, low-income communities, and diverse linguistic backgrounds. By appointing a representative from the early childhood community, the State Board of Education can more effectively:



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Align early childhood education policies with K-12 education to create a **seamless learning continuum**.

Address workforce challenges in the child care sector, including professional development and retention.

Advocate for equitable funding and resource allocation for early learning programs.

Ensure that child care providers have a **direct voice in regulatory and policy decisions** that impact their programs and the families they serve.

Supporting the Next Generation of Learners

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future emphasizes the importance of early learning, yet the inclusion of a dedicated ECE representative in the State Board of Education remains absent. Given the substantial investment Maryland is making in early childhood education, it is imperative that decision-makers at the highest level understand the nuances of early learning environments. The passage of SB 462 ensures that the Board has the expertise necessary to make informed decisions that will strengthen our early education infrastructure.

On behalf of the Maryland State Family Child Care Association and the thousands of early childhood educators we represent, I strongly urge this committee to support SB 462. The inclusion of an early childhood development professional will enhance the Board's ability to craft policies that truly reflect the needs of Maryland's youngest learners, their families, and the educators dedicated to their success.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to the future of education in Maryland.

Respectfully,

Ruby Daniels

President, Maryland State Family Child Care Association
Second-Year Independent Pre-K Expansion Grantee
Chair, Pillar 1 Advisory Committee to the AIB