



Testimony of Celebree Schools in Support of HB0524

To: Members of the Maryland State Legislature

From: Celebree Schools, Maryland's Largest Child Care Provider

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB0524 – Expansion of the State Board of Education to Include an Early Childhood Professional

Honorable Members of the Maryland State Legislature,

My name is Kristen Miller, and I represent Celebree Schools, Maryland's largest provider of early childhood education and care. Celebree Schools operates 24 schools across the state, and we are dedicated to providing high-quality early education that prepares children for success in school and life. I am writing today to express our strong support for HB0524, a bill that proposes to expand the Maryland State Board of Education from 13 seats to 14 seats, adding a seat for an early childhood professional.

As an organization that serves thousands of children and their families across Maryland, Celebree Schools understands the critical importance of having experienced, knowledgeable voices advocating for early childhood education at the highest levels of policy decision-making. The expansion of the State Board of Education to include a seat for an early childhood professional is a necessary step toward ensuring that the needs of young learners are prioritized and represented in our state's educational policies.

Early childhood education is the foundation upon which all future learning is built. Research shows that the first five years of a child's life are critical to their cognitive, social, and emotional development. As Maryland's largest child care provider, Celebree Schools has seen firsthand how vital it is for early childhood education to be integrated into broader educational policy discussions. By including an early childhood professional on the State Board of Education, HB0524 would ensure that decisions affecting young children are informed by expertise in early learning, developmental milestones, and the unique challenges faced by providers in this sector. It is essential that the experiences of early childhood educators, providers, and families are fully considered when shaping educational policy. A dedicated seat for an early childhood professional would ensure that the voices of those directly impacting children's development in these formative years are heard at the decision-making table.

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At Celebree Schools, we firmly believe that education is most effective when it is holistic, starting with strong foundations in early childhood. As the state continues to work toward improving educational outcomes for all students, it is imperative that early childhood education be recognized as an integral part of the K-12 system. Adding an early childhood professional to the State Board of Education would reflect Maryland's commitment to a comprehensive educational framework that prioritizes the developmental needs of children from birth through their transition into kindergarten. This representation is especially critical as Maryland faces ongoing challenges in early childhood education, such as access to affordable care, workforce shortages, and the need for enhanced quality standards. Having a dedicated advocate with specialized knowledge of early childhood education on the State Board would foster informed, effective solutions to these challenges and ensure that early learning programs receive the attention they deserve.

The addition of an early childhood professional to the State Board of Education will not only support the needs of young children but also help Maryland maintain its position as a leader in educational excellence. It is essential that our state's education policy reflects the complexity and importance of early childhood education, and HB0524 is a step in the right direction toward achieving this.

Celebree Schools is proud to support HB0524 and urges the Maryland State Legislature to pass this important bill. By expanding the State Board of Education to include an early childhood professional, we can ensure that Maryland's youngest learners have a strong advocate and that policies affecting early childhood education are informed by those who work directly with young children.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristen Miller

Director of Education

Celebree Schools

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