

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 533

(Senator Smith)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

Education - Teacher Certification - Montessori Schools

This bill allows an individual to be eligible for a certificate to teach students in a public Montessori school if the individual (1) holds a valid credential from a specified Montessori teacher preparation program and (2) holds a bachelor's degree in any field. The State Board of Education may require an individual to successfully pass an examination to be certified; however, beyond this examination, these teachers may not be required to meet any additional requirements to be certified to teach students in a Montessori school. An individual certificated in this manner may not teach students in a non-Montessori public school without meeting all other requirements relating to certification of public school teachers. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) can award teaching certificates to specified individuals using existing resources.

Local Effect: None. However, local school systems may have greater flexibility in hiring teachers to teach in public Montessori schools.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: "Montessori school" is defined as a public school that uses Montessori instruction as its primary method of instruction or a Montessori school approved by MSDE. Under the bill, the following Montessori credentials are acceptable: the American

Montessori Society; the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI); and a program accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE).

Current Law: To teach in a public school an individual must be eligible to be issued a certificate by the State Superintendent of Schools. The State does not require an individual to have a teaching certificate to teach in a private school, including a private Montessori School, under most circumstances. According to regulations, a private school teacher who provides instruction in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and courses for which secondary school credit is granted must hold at a minimum, one of the following: a bachelor's degree; 120 semester hours of college credit; or a bachelor's degree equivalent from a foreign country.

According to State regulations, an applicant for a professional certificate must meet the following requirements: (1) receive a bachelor's degree or higher from an institution of higher education; (2) complete one of the certification options; and (3) submit evidence of qualifying scores on the approved teacher certification tests. Rather than submit the qualifying scores, an individual may show one of the following: (1) a current, out-of-state teaching certificate and verification that a qualifying score was submitted to receive the certificate; (2) a professional teaching certificate and two years of satisfactory full-time teaching experience in the certification area at the appropriate level; or (3) evidence of distinction of knowledge, skill, and practice of teaching provided to the applicant by a national or regional organization that is approved by the State Superintendent of Schools.

There are different types of teaching certificates for public school teachers established in regulations. In general, first time teachers are awarded a standard professional certificate. To be awarded a standard professional certificate, an individual must, in general, earn a bachelor's degree from an approved teacher preparation program. In general, teachers move from having a standard professional certificate to an advanced professional certificate within five years. To earn an advanced professional certificate, a teacher must earn a master's degree in an area directly related to public school education, earn a specified number of credits, or earn a national board certification and meet other requirements. An advanced professional certificate must be renewed every five years. To be issued a renewal certificate a teacher must submit six acceptable semester credit hours.

To apply for a teaching certificate an individual must complete an [Initial Application for Educator Certification](#), which is available on MSDE's website and an account on the educator portal. The application requires information about education, student teaching, employment, and out-of-state certification. The application also requires an individual to disclose information including information about their criminal history and whether the individual's certificate has ever been revoked, suspended, or voluntarily surrendered. The application also asks if the individual has ever had a criminal history background check completed. An applicant sends the completed application to the certification branch of

MSDE. The certification branch then determines an individual’s eligibility and notifies the applicant.

Background: The “Montessori method” of teaching was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. Dr. Montessori’s educational philosophy was developed from her observations of children. It is characterized by an emphasis on independence, freedom within limits, and respect for a child’s natural psychological, physical, and social development. Montessori education is known for its mixed age classrooms filled with activities to be completed by children within a “prepared environment.” In general, to teach in an official “Montessori” school, teachers must have graduated from an approved Montessori program.

As shown in **Exhibit 1**, there are at least six public Montessori schools in the State. The schools are located in Baltimore City and Frederick and Prince George’s counties. All of the schools are elementary/middle schools. There are also private Montessori schools throughout the State.

Exhibit 1
Public Montessori Schools by County

<u>County</u>	<u>School Name</u>
Baltimore City	Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School
Frederick	Carroll Creek Montessori Public Charter School Monocacy Valley Montessori School
Prince George’s	John Hanson Montessori Judith P. Hoyer Montessori Robert Goddard Montessori

Note: In addition, Baltimore City operates a partial Montessori program at Garrett Heights Elementary/Middle School. It is unclear if this school qualifies under the bill.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

The 2018 [guide](#) to accreditation by MACTE can be found on its website. MACTE is classified as both an institutional and specialized/programmatic accrediting agency. The website also lists accredited programs. There are currently [four](#) MACTE accredited programs in Maryland. According to the guide, MACTE accredited programs can offer certification in Infant and Toddler (birth to 3 years), Early Childhood (2½ through 6 years), Elementary I (6 through 9 years), Elementary I-II (6 through 12 years), Secondary I

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(12 through 15 years), and Secondary I-II (12 through 18 years). Each type of certification must meet specified minimum requirements. For example, an Elementary I program must include at least 800 clock hours, of which 200 must be academic clock hours. The practicum is comprised of 400 clock hours with at least 120 hours student teaching. A minimum of 200 additional clock hours is required which must include one or more of the following: independent research; material-making; album preparation; additional student teaching hours; or additional academic contact hours.

The AMI training qualifications can be found on its website. AMI offers training in [AMI Diploma Assistants to Infancy \(0-3\)](#), [AMI Diploma Children's House \(3-6\)](#), and [AMI Diploma Elementary \(6-12\)](#). The AMI Diploma Children's House certification requires at least 400 hours of classroom-based training including lectures, a minimum of 140 hours of supervised practice with Montessori materials, and 170 hours of observation and teaching practicum in Montessori settings. This training is done through specified course units. AMI training centers are also listed on its [website](#).

In Maryland, some Montessori training programs are classified as [private career schools](#).

Currently, teachers who are assigned to a public school that offers Montessori instruction must hold a teaching certificate in the subject area to which they are assigned. Teachers in public Montessori schools currently have the same certification requirements as their counterparts who are not using Montessori instruction practices.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 1041 of 2018, a similar bill, received an unfavorable report from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. Its cross file, HB 1002, received a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee, but no further action was taken.

Designated Cross File: HB 1344 (Delegate Ivey) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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