

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Enrolled - Revised

House Bill 206

(Delegate Ivey)

Ways and Means

Education, Energy, and the Environment

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Early Childhood Education - Prekindergarten Programs - Montessori Schools  
and Programs

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This bill establishes specific eligibility requirements for Montessori schools and Montessori programs under the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant program and the publicly funded full-day prekindergarten program in regard to staff qualifications and student-to-staff ratio. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2023.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. Altering eligibility requirements for Montessori schools and programs is not anticipated to materially affect State funding under the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant program or the publicly funded full-day prekindergarten program.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** To the extent that Montessori schools and programs are small businesses, they may benefit from the specific eligibility requirements established under the bill.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The bill establishes exceptions to *certain* eligibility requirements for the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant program and the publicly funded full-day prekindergarten program. Specifically, to receive a grant for prekindergarten services under the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant program or the publicly funded full-day prekindergarten program, Montessori schools or Montessori programs (in addition to other specified requirements) must:

- maintain a student-to-classroom personnel ratio of no more than 10 to 1, with a maximum of 20 students per classroom if all of the students are younger than age 5;
- maintain a student-to-classroom personnel ratio of no more than 14 to 1, with a maximum of 28 students per classroom if some of the students are at least age 5; and
- require a teacher to hold a bachelor's degree and a Montessori credential issued by (1) the Association Montessori Internationale; (2) the American Montessori Society; or (3) a program accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education.

**Current Law:** Under existing requirements for the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant program, a qualified provider must certify to the Maryland State Department of Education that (in addition to other requirements) the provider, for each classroom funded, will (1) maintain a student-to-classroom personnel ratio of no more than 10 to 1 with a maximum of 20 children per classroom and (2) provide in each classroom at least one teacher certified in early childhood education by the State and at least one teacher's aide who has at least a high school degree.

Publicly funded full-day prekindergarten providers, in addition to other requirements, must also have a student-to-classroom personnel ratio of no more than 10 to 1 with a maximum of 20 children per classroom. Numerous alterations to publicly funded prekindergarten programs (including those applicable to the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant) are also being phased in as part of Chapter 36 of 2021 (the Blueprint for Maryland's Future), including provisions regarding minimum staff qualifications for eligibility. For example, beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, all prekindergarten providers must have high staff qualifications, including teachers who, at a minimum, hold (1) State certification for teaching in early childhood education or (2) a bachelor's degree in any field and are pursuing residency through the Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program, which includes early childhood coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of pedagogical content knowledge. In addition (also beginning in the 2025-2026 school year), teaching assistants must have at least (1) a Child Development Associate certificate or (2) an associate's degree.

Chapter 201 of 2022 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.

## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 1305 of 2022.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 6, 2023  
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