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February 14, 2020

Maggie McIntosh (Chair)
Appropriations
Hearing Room 121, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Madam Chair,

The Maryland Head Start Association (MHSA) works to strengthen the Maryland Head Start and Early Head Start community by providing advocacy for vulnerable children and families, leadership, and professional development. Head Start and Early Head Start are federally funded programs that provide early childhood education and comprehensive services in the areas of health, nutrition, disabilities, family support services, family goal setting, parent involvement and training, and other services to the most vulnerable families throughout Maryland communities.

MHSA is in support of HB1300 with suggested amendments we believe will help the State of Maryland to alleviate cost, improve oversight, and expand eligible program pools while preserving teacher quality.

1. **Partner with Head Start** – Head Start and Early Start programs receive more than \$100 million each year to serve families with income less than or equal to 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Under Subtitle 1A on page 121, a “Tier 1 Child” means a 3 or 4-year-old child whose family income is less than or equal to 300% of the FPL. MHSA suggests creating a sub-tier under Tier 1. Families in this sub-tier will have income less than or equal to 100% of the FPL and be encouraged to participate in an eligible Head Start program in their county.

This model will benefit the State and Head Start programs. A memorandum of understanding that includes a negotiated cost per child will reduce the cost burden on the State and help ensure eligible Head Start programs remain fully enrolled while receiving funds to continuously improve quality. A meeting is needed to explain this concept in more detail.

2. **Private Provider representation on the Accountability and Implementation Board** – Under Subtitle 4 on page 59, it states that on July 1, 2020, an Accountability and Implementation Board will begin developing a comprehensive implementation plan for the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. MHSA recommends that participating private providers have representation on the Board, allowing the Board to understand how implementation strategies might impact each specific provider. Also, MHSA supports county “Boards” or “Councils” that include private providers to help facilitate oversight within each county.

3. **Alternative Pathways for Teacher Certification** – MHSA recommends that a Head Start teacher with a bachelor’s degree, has worked in a Head Start program for “X” amount of time, and has met the Head Start Performance Standards requirement for professional development and coaching, be eligible for teacher certification. Similar alternatives for community-based programs will increase the number of programs eligible to participate in the Full-Day Prekindergarten program. MHSA also recommends programs be allowed to hire a teacher that holds a bachelor’s degree and pursue certification.

MHSA understands the level of information and detail required to make such amendments. Also, Head Start has in-depth requirements and oversight, so deeper conversations are needed to build our partnership. To help you understand national statistics and partnership models, please see the attached document, “Effective Partnerships Between Head Start and State Prekindergarten in 2020.”

Concerns and/or Questions

- On page 140, it states that a portion of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment may be administered during the summer months to enrolled prekindergarten students in the county. Does “enrolled prekindergarten students” refer to any child participating in prekindergarten, whether public or private? It also seems to create an unfair testing advantage. Children not enrolled in prekindergarten will not test over the summer months, and as a result, test lower due to summer learning loss.
- HB1300 refers to Head Start as the Ulysses Currie Head Start program. Are you referring SB373, which was renamed the Ulysses Currie Act? Please provide clarification.
- On page 44, full-day is defined as “not less than 7 hours or more than 12 hours per day.” However, on page 121, full-day is defined as a “six and one-half hour school day.” Are these definitions under two separate grants? Please clarify as these two definitions are contradictions.

MHSA is available for discussion whenever is convenient for you. Please email execdir@md-hsa.org or call 301-744-9472.

Simeon Russell



Executive Officer

Maryland Head Start Association, Inc.