

DATE: April 1, 2021

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 854

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

BILL TITLE: Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center - Inclusion of Child Welfare Data and Governing Board

DHS POSITION: Support

The Department of Human Services (the Department) respectfully offers this letter of support regarding House Bill 854 (HB 854). This bill as amended by the House of Delegates would require the Department to share certain data with the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center regarding child welfare programs to improve coordination between the State's education and child welfare systems.

House Bill 854 provides a positive opportunity for Maryland to help with educational planning and attainment for children receiving services through the Department, including child protective services, family preservation services, and State-sponsored out-of-home services. There is currently limited information and data sharing between agencies regarding children receiving these type of welfare services, specifically in the areas of: (1) pre-school and grade school experience, (2) school stability, (3) absenteeism, (4) suspensions, (5) grade status, (6) performance on standardized tests (7) graduation rate or GED attainment (8) the number of foster youth attending a 2 year college; 4 year college; or workforce training program, and a variety of other factors that may predict the educational success and economic outcomes of students.

By having this information available statewide and broken down by jurisdiction, Maryland's local departments of social services will have the information required for effective educational planning. In turn, the ability to plan more effectively may bolster the educational attainment of children receiving these services.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer support for HB 854. We ask the committee to give HB 854 a favorable report.

