

**Testimony Concerning HB 0467**  
**Education-Teacher Certification-Montessori Schools**  
**Submitted to Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**  
**February 10, 2022**

**Position: Support**

My name is Bria Pleasant and I am a proud product of Prince George's County Public Schools, specifically the Montessori Program. My Montessori journey began at Doswell E. Brooks elementary school at Pre-K 3, when Montessori was integrated into schools throughout Prince George's County, and transitioned to John Hanson Montessori School when the Montessori programs moved to two formal schools. Being promoted to high school from John Hanson is where I initially thought my journey would end.

After completing my Bachelor's degree, I sought out a Montessori teacher training program to continue my education and pursue a career in teaching. After extensive research to find the most elite program, I found Association Montessori Internationale and pursued their year-long training program at Washington Montessori Institute. In that calendar year, I received in depth curriculum instruction for grades 1-6 across all disciplines, child development theory, completed extensive practicum hours, completed oral and written examinations about theory and curriculum, was exposed to special education, its laws and adaptations tailored to Montessori, and learned how to research at a higher level.

My Montessori training brought me full circle; I returned to Prince George's County Public Schools, and to John Hanson Montessori School for my career. To my dismay, I quickly learned that all of my Montessori training would be for naught as I applied for my Marhland teacher's certificate. Upon receiving my transcript review after three-fourths of the full school year, I learned the only credit to be accepted from my Master's Degree and Montessori training program that would be Teaching Methodology. At the start of my contract in 2018, I was placed on a conditional teaching certificate for a length of two school years, with the condition that I complete 12 of the 33 credits, and 1 of the 3 exams required for this certification or I would be out of a job.

After three years of overloading myself: with eleven certification classes over my school years and breaks, studying for and taking two assessments, and investing well over \$5000 into these requirements, all while upholding the integrity of Prince George's County Public Schools Montessori Program, I can finally say I am an Advanced Professional Certificate holder.

The passage of HB 0467 would mean that teachers, like myself, will be able to fully dedicate themselves to being present in their classrooms and developing their professional practice right away. I was fortunate enough to be able to complete my certificate requirements but this is not the case for all educators. I have witnessed fully certified Montessori teachers struggle to find this balance due to various life circumstances. Passing this bill would ensure highly qualified teachers are able to fill vacant positions and remain in the classroom without the looming threat of job termination. It would also mean that my

current and potential colleagues would be held to the same level of rigor as other national and international Montessori programs.

Sincerely,  
Bria Pleasant