

**SB 609\_FAV\_MSCCA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Christina Peusch

Position: FAV



**Caring For Maryland's Most  
Important Natural Resource™**

## **Maryland State Child Care Association**

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*The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. MSCCA has over 5000 professionals working in the field of early childhood education. We believe children are our most important natural resources and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.*

Testimony in Favor

SB 609 Education - Early Childhood Education Teachers - Qualifications

March 1, 2023

Submitted to: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The Maryland State Child Care Association enthusiastically supports SB 609. We applaud the administration and many sponsors for recognizing, as well as addressing numerous educator workforce shortages and barriers impacting our state, our children, our families and our education system.

*The Blueprint for Maryland's Future* is investing in our youngest citizens. In order to accomplish a Mixed-Delivery Pre-K system, involving both public schools and private community-based childcare providers, will be needed to accommodate the number of students. In order to attain the goals set by the *Blueprint* for mixed delivery, it is imperative to understand the unintended consequences and also the numerous barriers for private providers to achieve the current codified requirements including the teacher state prek-3 certification requirements.

The AIB, MSDE and sponsors understand and support the need to create alternative pathways to be inclusive of community-based providers/programs along with addressing the critical workforce shortages. SB 609 will address ways to achieve the goals of the *Blueprint* and takes steps to overcome barriers and inequities without sacrificing quality or closing businesses to participate, which hurts parents who need care for birth to five in Maryland. Child care providers cannot afford to lose their three and four year olds to public schools, however not all are willing nor can equitably participate in the expansion of public pre-K. More unintended consequences include less access and affordability for infant and toddler care, more child care providers closing businesses and more unlicensed/illegal child care which leads to poor outcomes for children.

Blueprint Pillar 1 has many important goals including a substantial increase in the supply of early childhood education teachers, funding for both public-school and community-based pre-K, and measurables including reducing or eliminating achievement gaps. The Accountability and Implementation Board created a report that offers recommendations related to Pillar 1 and recognizes some of the barriers for a true mixed delivery system for prekindergarten in Maryland—requiring that all providers, both public and private, meet certain standards to receive public funding.

MSCCA is concerned as the *Blueprint*, especially related to Pillar 1 is implemented and we are still recovering from a pandemic. Many businesses are all struggling with a critical workforce shortage. Public schools are adjusting qualifications and soliciting in any way they can to fill teacher shortages. Child care is also struggling. Maryland lost over 800 child care programs since 2020, about 10%, and although many jobs have recovered, child care has lagged behind. Maryland is second highest in the country for loss of child care jobs at an alarming 25.5%, according to the June 2022 jobs report. (<https://communitychangeaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/June-9-State-by-State-Analysis-of-Changes-in-the-Child-Care-Sector-Over-the-Pandemic.pdf>)

Recovery of jobs in the child care industry specifically has been slower than most other industries. According to Bureau of Labor and Statistics in October 2022 figures show that employment in the child care sector is still 8.5% lower than February 2020. This is a shortage of approximately 88,000 jobs. The slow recovery in child care sector is due to numerous factors including closures and other pandemic related issues as well as a workforce leaving for better compensating jobs. The persistent shortages in child care has a ripple impact across the economy. Child care is an economic and equity imperative and essential to everyone, even if you do not have children or your children are adults.

We applaud the goals for mixed delivery, and you say you need child care providers to reach the Blueprint Pillar 1 goals, however there were only 90 applicants for the prek grants and of the 90 less than 30 were awarded. This number doesn't come close to meeting the 70/30 minimum split (or the final recommendations of 50/50 split) to deliver prek. Barriers include teacher certification requirements, lack of an equitable alternative pathway to certification for community providers, lack of resources to successfully write for and administer very complex prek grants and funding flows. Another barrier to true mixed delivery system is the issue of funding. This pre-k grant is flat funded, with a per child rate across the state. No other early childhood program is flat funded. The cost of living, and the cost of operating a business, varies across the state. The total cost of quality childcare has not been considered based on these differentials. The amount currently offered might fully fund a program in Western Maryland, but will probably not break even for a program in the central part of the state, yet both programs receive the same dollar amount per slot.

Maryland should consider other states alternatives as they adjust and consider the importance of essential child care. This school year Boston UPK will launch a new **per classroom funding formula** to ensure high quality learning environments for students. The new funding formula and rate will provide financial and operational stability to child care providers, empower them to implement high quality programming and ensure teachers at community sites receive pay commensurate with staff in district run schools. Providing per classroom instead of per pupil funding will provide stability for child care providers who have been greatly impacted by COVID. Boston mixed delivery model ensures family choice and that there is no wrong door for families looking for high quality prek experience. [\\$20 Million Investment to Expand Boston's Universal Pre-K Program | Boston.gov](#)

The interesting data from MSDE is that we already meet numerous requirements for Pillar 1. Maryland EXCELS reports there are 1,283 levels 3,4, and 5 programs participating therefore plenty to meet the 70/30 recommended split. Additionally, according to MSDE's database 1,993 child care teachers have bachelor's degrees, 403 with masters degrees, 14 with doctorates and 66 with foreign degrees. We should easily be able to meet the mixed delivery goals and avoid waivers in Blueprint, which will become the norm, but cannot if we don't make equitable changes including; expanding and creating provisional alternative pathways, giving credit for prior learning, credit for experience in the field, stackable credentials, timelines to achieve certification or equivalencies/alternatives for pre-k teacher certification, alignment of the current credentialing system with college credit, recognition and respect of competencies and work experience, as well as sustainable funding formulas to be competitive.

Greater emphasis on **equitable, fully funded**, alternative pathways and supports that meet the needs of Early Childhood professionals currently working in the field is needed. This means considering multiple entry points: EC professionals may be starting with a H.S. diploma, an A.A. degree, or a Bachelor's or Master's degree. Each of these professionals needs a pathway to certification if we are to meet the demand for teachers.

#### **Examples of Needed Pathways and Supports Include:**

Apprenticeships, competency-based education models, stackable and portable course work and credits, course work that meets the needs of teachers whose primary language is not English, remedial course work for those who need it prior to enrolling in college-level courses, and coaching and support to ensure persistence in higher education. The ECE field needs bold and innovative approaches, like SB 609 to address the workforce crisis AND approaches that meet the needs of the Birth to age 5 workforce that is currently employed across the state. We recommend and appreciate includes legislative language that mandates the development of innovative approaches to certification in Maryland to ensure that the vision of a mixed delivery system is realized, and that further degradation of the childcare infrastructure is averted.

If more licensed child care businesses close due to the loss of four year old's and a portion of income eligible three year old's because we cannot compete with public schools in prek arena for teachers, how will this impact goals to increase supply of teachers and reduce achievement gaps when infants toddlers twos and some three year old's will have less access to high quality child care, be forced into unlicensed or informal care which is proven to have poor kindergarten readiness outcomes? We are already losing our teachers to Amazon, Target, Washington DC child care jobs which are paying 15k bonuses as well as parity with public prek teachers and no teacher certification requirements. More unintended consequences will include higher infant toddler tuition which parents can barely access and afford now. We lost our kindergarteners when preschool for all rolled out and we pivoted the best we could, however we cannot survive without 3- and 4-year-olds.

The public prek grant parameters specify that if a program is not 85% enrolled by December 31, funding will be diminished by the number of unfilled slots. This is a burdensome penalty placed on community providers. It is my understanding that funding for public schools is not reduced if their enrollment targets are not met, so why are community providers penalized for this? A program that applies for this grant in good faith and commits to hold childcare slots open for income eligible children will incur the same fixed operating costs regardless of whether they are fully enrolled or not. Just like public schools, a community program must continue to pay the full salary and benefits of the lead and assistant teachers, they still pay the full amount of rent and facility maintenance costs, they still pay the full amount of water, gas, and electric regardless of how many children are enrolled. The difference for the community provider is that once the program commits to enrolling a certain number of income eligible children, they must leave those slots open and cannot give them away to a full tuition paying family.

The grant also stipulates that MSDE will provide support with recruitment to help community-based programs fill those committed slots. However, the only support MSDE has provided has been to suggest talking with the LEA or putting fliers up in the community. For a program that has already taken these steps, and paid for advertising, and reached out to as many community partners as possible to spread the word about the prekindergarten slots available at their program, yet still is unable to find eligible children to enroll, they not only are NOT receiving support from MSDE, but the program is also penalized and has money taken away that they can't afford to lose.

Additionally, there are costs associated with this grant that are not accounted for regarding teacher certification. To begin with, finding certified teachers is a challenge everywhere. According to University of Maryland, College Park in the School of Education, adjunct faculty, Randi Albertsen, over the past 2 years, the capacity of incoming students in her class has been 25, yet she has not had more than 12 potential teachers enrolled. People just are not choosing to go into this field. The current system to participate in public prekindergarten expansion as a mixed delivery system as it exists places a much higher burden on the childcare community, with barriers to participation at every turn. If the state intends to implement the Blueprint to fidelity, then it needs to create a more equitable, accessible system for community-based providers. SB 609 takes necessary steps to address the critical workforce shortages, acknowledge and address equity issues in alternative prek pathways and focus on viable solutions to numerous problems that have very real unintended consequences for children, families, child care/early childhood education.

MSCCA recommends a favorable committee report on SB 609.

**SEIU Local 500 Testimony SB 0609 in Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Christopher Cano

Position: FAV



SEIU Local 500

901 Russell Avenue, Suite 300, Gaithersburg, MD 20879

March 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2023

**RE: Senate Bill 0609 – Education - Early Childhood Education Teachers - Qualifications**

**Support**

Chairman Feldman and Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members,

Thanks to the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*, our state is investing in its youngest citizens by working towards universal Pre-K. In order to accomplish this, a Mixed-Delivery Pre-K system, involving both public schools and private childcare providers, will be needed to accommodate the number of students. In order to attain the goals set by the *Blueprint* for mixed delivery, Maryland must work to remove barriers for private providers to achieve the certifications needed - without needing to sacrifice their businesses.

In order to offer a Pre-Kindergarten program, childcare providers must first be certified through the state of Maryland by a county board. Currently, both Teacher Preparation Programs and Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs require a teacher residency, which are typically run through local school systems that do not offer Pre-Kindergarten classes-- meaning that these Pre-K teachers are completing practicums in K-12 schools, not qualified Pre-Kindergarten programs. Oftentimes, these aspiring teachers are forced to close their doors during this residency as they cannot continue their own childcare operations when placed in a local school system.

Data from MSDE shows that the childcare sector already meets numerous requirements for Pillar 1. Maryland EXCELS reports there are 1,283 level 3,4, and 5 programs participating - plenty to meet the 70/30 recommended split. Additionally, according to MSDE's database 1,993 child care teachers have bachelor's degrees, 403 with masters degrees, 14 with doctorates and 66 with foreign degrees.

Child care providers stand ready to meet the mixed delivery goals in the *Blueprint* but cannot if equitable changes aren't made.

The goals and objectives of this bill are clear. First, it allows institutons of Higher Education or Nonprofit Organizations, in addition to County Board's, to establish an Alternative Teacher Program with approval by the State Superintendent. Second, it ensures that certifications allow

for residencies to be completed in a qualified Pre-Kindergraten Program. Third, it offers an Alternative Certification for Pre-Kindergarten teachers that establishes equivalencies for certain requirements already outlined in the Blueprint, including a competency-based certification and apprenticeships. Finally, it allows for teachers pursuing state certification through a state approved Alternative Preparation Program to meet the high staff qualifications to begin in the 2025-2026 school year.

Thank you for your kind consideration and we ask that you give a favorable report for SB 0609.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA  
Coordinator for Member Political Engagement  
SEIU Local 500

**SB 609\_MFN\_FWA\_Macsherry.pdf**

Uploaded by: Clinton Macsherry

Position: FAV





**Testimony Concerning SB 609**  
**“Education – Early Childhood Education Teachers – Qualifications”**  
**Submitted to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**  
**March 1, 2023**

**Position: Favorable**

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports SB 609, which would adjust the requirements for early childhood education (ECE) teacher certification obtained through an alternative preparation program and would establish competency-based certification criteria for pre-K providers. In these ways, the legislation would help address significant barriers to fulfilling the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future’s ambitious and critically important goals for pre-K expansion.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and early childhood education, as well as other supports for children and families in Maryland. We have been active in state and federal debates on child care policy and are strongly committed to ensuring that children, along with their parents, have access to high-quality, affordable programs and educational opportunities.

The Blueprint states that pre-K teachers shall hold State ECE teaching certification or a bachelor’s degree in any field while they pursue alternative certification beginning in the 2025–26 academic year. Increasing the number of high-quality ECE providers and educators is essential to the Blueprint’s expansion of full-day pre-K for all 4-year-olds and for 3-year-olds from low-income households. The Blueprint mandates a public-private delivery system in which schools partner with high-quality, community-based ECE programs. The importance of public-private delivery is four-fold: it allows school systems to focus funds on instruction rather than enormous new capital costs; it better meets the wrap-around care needs of working parents; it incentivizes the expansion of quality for all children served in the community-based programs, not just the pre-K population; and it avoids undermining the affordability of child care for children birth through age 3.

The proposed adjustments to alternative certification will enable childcare providers to meet certification requirements while maintaining their jobs and keeping their programs operational. This will also help increase the diversity of ECE educators. The establishment of competency-based certification criteria will not diminish quality standards but rather give providers and the State new and necessary flexibility in determining that the standards are met.

MFN urges the Committee’s favorable consideration of SB 609.

**SEIU Local 500 Testimony SB 0609 in Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Fatima Whitmore

Position: FAV



SEIU Local 500

901 Russell Avenue, Suite 300, Gaithersburg, MD 20879

March 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2023

**RE: Senate Bill 0609 – Education - Early Childhood Education Teachers - Qualifications  
Support**

Chairman Feldman and Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members,

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Thank you for your kind consideration and we ask that you give a favorable report for SB 0609.

**MD Catholic Conference\_SB 609\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Garrett O'Day

Position: FAV



**March 1, 2023**

**SB 609**

**Education - Early Childhood Education Teachers - Qualifications**

**Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 609. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 609 would create a parallel path to early childhood teacher certification. It would authorize prekindergarten alternative teacher preparation programs, leading to a larger well-trained early childhood professional workforce.

Catholic providers have long participated in and supported prekindergarten expansion in Maryland, winning competitive grant bids for programs to provide prekindergarten to four-year-old children whose family income is 300% of the federal poverty level (FPL) or lower. All three of (arch)dioceses serving Maryland have a strong commitment to education and recognize the important role that kindergarten-readiness plays in a child's educational development. Within the State of Maryland, there are approximately 120 prekindergarten programs in Catholic schools or parishes, in addition to Headstart programs. Nearly all are accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by MSDE and a vast majority of them employ state-certified prekindergarten teachers. However, this bill helps to address workforce shortages in early childhood education, while ensuring these programs have continuity in well-trained teachers.

A strong prekindergarten education has been proven to greatly enhance a child's educational trajectory. Like early childhood care, it is also an essential component to supporting strong, economically secure families. Prekindergarten availability also helps to empower working parents with workplace access, an imperative part of combating poverty. For these reasons, the Conference respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 609.

# **SB 609.Early Educator Reforms.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FAV

**BILL:** Senate Bill 609  
**TITLE:** Education - Early Childhood Education Teachers - Qualifications  
**DATE:** March 1, 2023  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports Senate Bill 609 which would make changes to rules governing teacher preparation programs for critically needed teachers in prekindergarten classrooms in public schools and private centers. These programs are to be vastly expanded under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and deserve the attention and reforms contained in this legislation.

All local boards of education value the essential role of the educators and staff persons who work for the public school system as the keys to educating and meeting the needs of our students. Unfortunately, Maryland continues to experience a major teacher shortage due to a number of factors including the low number of teacher candidates graduating from Maryland's universities, the number of potential teachers entering the profession, and the competitiveness of working condition and salaries. Again, MABE greatly appreciates that the Blueprint addresses these issues by mandating minimum salaries of \$60,000 for teachers, providing raises for teachers based on National Board Certification, and reducing the amount of time teachers are obligated to be in classrooms. However, the Blueprint also mandates dramatically expanded full-day prekindergarten programs offered by public schools and private providers. Therefore, MABE appreciates that Senate Bill 609 directly addresses the challenges to broaden opportunities to recruit and prepare more early educators to meet these demands.

MABE has consistently supported efforts by the General Assembly to assist local school systems in addressing the critical shortages of highly qualified teachers, principals, and other staff in every school and the classrooms of all students across the State. At this time, Maryland is experiencing critical shortages across all of the educational and related services professional fields; a critical shortage of the staff needed to deliver and support student learning and to administer schools as educational leaders. Again, the reforms included in Senate Bill 609 closely align with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

On behalf of all local boards, MABE firmly believes that the role of a full complement of qualified staff will be pivotal to the successful implementation of Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The Blueprint features major expansions of full-day prekindergarten, student behavioral health services, college readiness courses, and career and technical education programs. Passage of Senate Bill 609 will certainly advance the statewide effort to develop the workforce of early educators through the thoughtful expansion of alternative preparation programs.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 609.



# Testimony Concerning Senate SB 609.pdf

Uploaded by: Rebecca Hancock

Position: FAV



**Testimony Concerning Senate SB 609  
Submitted to the Senate  
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee**

**March 1, 2023**

The Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA) is a Professional Association representing Registered Family Child Care and Large Family Child Care since 1983. The mission of MSFCCA is to promote and enhance the profession by advocating for all of the 989 family child care businesses through the 19 local Associations that make up our statewide membership. Registered family child care programs serve thousands of children each day enabling parents to work and support a strong Maryland Economy. Pending legislation, regulatory changes, and statewide programs and initiatives that impact these small programs is the main focus of our advocacy efforts. Maryland is recognized as a leader nationally in early care and education policy and MSFCCA is grateful for the opportunity to affect positive change to ensure equal access to early care and education for all children.

The first five years are critical in a child's development, therefore adequate funding and reasonable policy is *vital* to guarantee these small programs continue to serve Maryland families. The passage of HB1300/SB1000 (2020) "Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Implementation Maryland's School Systems, has been charged with implementing pre-k expansion programs across Maryland. Unfortunately many local school systems are facing the reality that they do not have the available space or number of teachers to fulfill this obligation.

According to the Blueprint, 30% of the Pre-K Expansion Programs must be community-based providers and a quality untapped resource for these providers is Registered family child care. Unfortunately, there are barriers that keep these qualified providers from participating in the

pre-k expansion. The most difficult being the Student-Teacher Internship that completes teacher training in MD. Registered providers who run small one-person programs are unable to fulfill the requirement to close for 5 months to complete the student teaching in public school settings.

The Child Care Career Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF) Grant in Maryland helps fund an Associates or Bachelor's Degree in Early Education for providers. However in pursuing a degree, the student must complete the student teaching component which means the family child care provider must either pay the salary of a substitute or close his/her program, neither of these options benefits the provider or the families in care. The first option would mean that the provider would have to pay the full-time salary of the substitute, which is sometimes more than the provider makes. The second option would mean closing the program and losing all enrolled children to another program, which can be difficult for the families.

Creating alternative pathways for providers to obtain their teaching certifications by including a provider's years of experience in the field as well as utilizing more creative ways to accomplish the student-teaching component in his/her program. The use of technology and/or a visiting instructor may be an option to increase Maryland's ability to offer quality pre-k program options for families.

MSFCCA fully supports SB609 as long as the alternative pathways are reasonable and sustainable for family child care providers and will enable them to participate in Maryland's Blueprint for the Future Pre-K Expansion.

**SB0609 Howard Co BOE Testimony 030123 for EEE - Ea**

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: FAV



**Board of Education of Howard County  
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
March 1, 2023**

**Board of Education  
of Howard County**

Antonia Watts, *Chair*

Yun Lu, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*

Linfeng Chen, Ph.D.

Jennifer Swickard Mallo

Jacky McCoy

Jolene Mosley

Abisola Ayoola  
*Student Member*

Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent  
Secretary/Treasurer*

**SB0609: FAVORABLE  
Education - Early Childhood Education Teachers – Qualifications**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **SB0609 Education - Early Childhood Education Teachers - Qualifications** as a tool to expand the prekindergarten workforce in Maryland.

SB0609 allows for the establishment of alternative teacher preparation programs leading to state certification by a county board, an institution of higher education, a nonprofit organization, or the Maryland State Department of Education specific to early childhood educators. Differing from existing requirements for educators to complete a practicum in order to graduate from a program, SB0609 also allows early childhood educators to receive credit for prior experience in their field. Criteria for the application of prior learning would be set by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

While a key component of early childhood expansion under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future includes the use of local nonpublic prekindergarten providers, this past year only one Howard County provider (a nonprofit that supports family providers in Maryland) in addition to the existing Head Start program applied for and received state funds to participate. Beyond the requirement to be full-day, participation in the extensive requirements of the early childhood education pillar of Blueprint include achieving EXCELS ratings, mandated student to teacher ratios, educational background minimums for teacher and classroom assistants, and other provisions to be equivalent to that of the local school system such as teacher salary. Current certification requirements are one such barrier for nonpublic provider participation.

The Board and Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) staff supports SB0609 for the hope that allowance of alternative preparation programs and prior learning experience would increase nonpublic participation. Nonpublic colleagues in the early childhood field have shared that a requirement for student teaching to take place somewhere other than their current place of employment is also a barrier. The addition of a separate pathway specific to early childhood educators, while not addressed in this bill, would presumably also alleviate this challenge.

An additional provision of SB0609 adds the ability for an educator pursuing a certificate through an alternative preparation program as added to the law above to be

an eligible early childhood provider. Under existing Blueprint requirements starting in SY2025-2026, eligible providers must hold certification for teaching in early childhood education or have a bachelor's degree in any field and are pursuing residency through the Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program. Similar to the above provision, this would be a benefit to nonpublic staff who do not currently hold certificates but are interested in pursuing in order to become eligible for funding. It may also give HCPSS more flexibility for staffing a classroom as the school system would have the ability to hire or keep a person in a position when pursuing the alternative preparation program.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report of SB0609 from this Committee.