



House Bill 881

Early Learning Collaboratives - Established and Tax Credit for Contributions

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: March 1, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 881. This bill would authorize the creation of early learning collaboratives that partner public and private prekindergarten providers in a collaborative program, with access to the same state funding and technical assistance available to independent providers.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future phases in expansion of universal, full-day prekindergarten over the next few years. Universally, however, Maryland counties and their respective local education agencies are facing challenges identifying public and private providers to serve under the Blueprint expansion. Independently and collaboratively, counties across the state are working to find creative and reasonable solutions to these challenges, and they view HB 881 as one solution to this complex issue.

Counties are enthused by the bill's smart proposal that local collaboratives be composed of one public provider, such as a county board of education, one Head Start provider, and one or more licensed private providers. In doing so, counties will be able to leverage the existing resources and infrastructure of these different sectors to provide quality early learning to a greater number of Marylanders. Furthermore, under the bill, established collaboratives would then be able to access state technical and financial support.

Counties welcome the innovation of HB 881 as an additional tool to meet the early learning goals of the Blueprint and stand ready to partner with the General Assembly and State on this solution and others. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** HB 881 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.