



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 888

DATE: March 1, 2023

SPONSOR: Delegates Solomon, *et al.*

ASSIGNED TO: Ways & Means

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POSITION: FAVORABLE (Department of Health and Human Services)

Education - Prekindergarten Alternative Teacher Preparation Program - Authorization and Reporting

House Bill 888 creates an alternative pathway for pre-kindergarten teachers to receive resident teacher certificates from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). This new pathway for prekindergarten teachers would serve as an alternative to the current teacher preparation programs that are available to prekindergarten teachers and would be in addition to the alternative teacher preparation programs that are available to teachers of primary and secondary education. Under the bill, a prekindergarten alternative teacher preparation program would be established by MSDE, a county board of education, an institution of higher education, or a non-profit organization and approved by the State Superintendent of Schools. It would focus on early childhood coursework and require a participant to complete a residency that may include experiential learning, stackable credentials, or State credential program alignment. As with the alternative primary and secondary teacher preparation programs already in law, beginning July 1, 2025, the bill would require prekindergarten teachers participating in an alternative teacher preparation program to qualify for an initial certificate by passing a nationally recognized, portfolio-based assessment of teaching ability; passing a rigorous State-specific examination of mastery of reading instruction and content for the grade level the individual will be teaching; and satisfactorily completing any other requirements established by the Maryland State Board of Education.

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services supports House Bill 888 because it would allow more high-quality teachers within the early care and education system to become credentialed, which creates more high-quality prekindergarten options for families. With the requirements of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future for credentialed teachers, only 10% of the licensed programs within Maryland would qualify to participate in the pre-kindergarten mixed-delivery system. House Bill 888 supports workforce development of our early care and education teachers by promoting worker experience, availability of credentials earned, and practical supervision as a potential pathway to meeting our need for teachers, ultimately increasing the availability of pre-kindergarten seats for our youngest residents to get the education they need at an early age. Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services supports House Bill 888 as a reasonable and needed solution to the State's early education teacher shortage and for this reason respectfully requests the committee to issue a favorable report.