



Testimony Concerning HB 888

Education – Prekindergarten Alternative Teacher Preparation Program – Authorization and Reporting

Submitted to the House Ways and Means Committee

March 1, 2023

Position: Support

The Family Child Care Alliance of Maryland (the Alliance) was incorporated in 2019 to develop a staffed family child care (FCC) network supporting FCC providers delivering public Prekindergarten. In 2020, in cooperation with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the Alliance created the ASPIRE program for eligible FCC providers offering MSDE-funded PreK programs. In the 2022-2023 school year, 27 ASPIRE FCC providers have met MSDE PreK teacher certification requirements and receive PreK funding for more than 120 eligible students. Nine more providers met the requirements after the beginning of the school year and will be eligible for funding in the fall. Twenty-one additional ASPIRE providers are pursuing bachelor's degrees and P-3 certification. All ASPIRE FCC providers receive instructional coaching, MSDE approved curriculum, a community of practice support group, and grant management services from the Alliance.

The goals of the ASPIRE program are:

- To increase the supply of P-3 certified teachers providing high-quality PreK instruction in FCC homes;
- To build a support network for P-3 certified teachers working in FCC homes;
- To ensure all children in FCC PreK programs, regardless of eligibility for public PreK, enter kindergarten with all the skills they need to succeed; and
- To lead the effort to design and test systems to best support PreK in FCC and then make those findings available across the field.

The Alliance's ASPIRE FCC providers are currently funded by the PreK Expansion Grant. When that funding stream ends, the Prekindergarten Alternative Teacher Preparation Program proposed by HB 888 will be essential for the inclusion of FCC providers in the MSDE's diverse delivery of PreK as envisioned by the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*.

The Alliance strongly supports HB 888, and we ask you to give it a favorable report.