



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

House Bill 1385

Early Childhood Education - Prekindergarten Providers - Resident and Conditional Teaching Certificates

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: March 6, 2024

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1385. This bill creates resident and conditional early childhood teaching certificates for prospective providers, enabling them to work in pre-K facilities while pursuing full certification. Counties see this as an additional tool to address the need for more providers and facilities to implement this aspect of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Counties have worked creatively with local school systems to support and grow early childhood education programs and workforces, but they need greater support from the State and legislature to successfully implement the Blueprint's vision for pre-K in Maryland. While the capacity and situation vary between counties, these are near-universal issues facing every corner of the state.

By creating conditional and resident certifications, HB 1385 helps address the Maryland's current challenges of not having enough early childhood education workers to expand pre-K services as required under the Blueprint. Prospective workers with conditional and residential certificates will be eligible to work in public and private pre-K facilities, allowing them to gain critical experience in the field and alleviate some of the early childhood education workforce shortage.

Counties strongly support the creation of building block certifications and workforce development offered by HB 1385 as another tool to ensure the successful expansion of early childhood education to serve all Maryland's three- and four-year-olds. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS HB 1385** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.