



Testimony Concerning HB 1385
“Early Childhood Education - Prekindergarten Providers - Resident and
Conditional Teaching Certificates”
Submitted to the House Ways & Means Committee
March 6, 2024

Position: Support

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports HB 1385, which would require the Maryland State Department of Education to establish both resident and conditional early childhood teaching certificates. 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.

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.

As the State ramps up public pre-K in mixed delivery settings, HB 1385 could help promote parity amongst private prekindergarten providers participating in a publicly funded full-day prekindergarten program and public-school employees.

MFN respectfully urges favorable consideration of HB 1385.

