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of Howard County**

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**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
April 2, 2025**

HB1475: FAVORABLE

Office of Child Care Advisory Council - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten - Analysis and Report (Mixed Delivery Model Viability Act)

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **Office of Child Care Advisory Council - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten - Analysis and Report (Mixed Delivery Model Viability Act)** as a well-informed study that would take a needed look at the implementation of the early childhood pillar of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

HB1475 requires the Office of Child Care Advisory Council within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to conduct an analysis of the mixed delivery, publicly funded prekindergarten program under the Blueprint. The bill further requires that the Council solicit feedback from public prekindergarten providers, private prekindergarten providers, and child care providers who have elected not to participate in the publicly funded prekindergarten program. An interim report would be due by June 1, 2026, which must include results of the analysis, including recommendations for changes to regulations, policies, and procedures to increase the efficacy of the publicly funded prekindergarten program and to make the program more equitable for providers and families. By December 31, 2027, the Council must submit a final report to the General Assembly on the results of the analysis, any changes made by MSDE in response to the recommendations in the interim report, and any additional recommendations from the Council for changes to regulation, policies, procedures, or statute regarding the mixed delivery, publicly funded prekindergarten system.

HB1475 is extensive in its requirements for items the Council must review, but accurately depicts the many questions and concerns raised by both public and private providers in implementing the early childhood pillar of the Blueprint. Much of what is included in the study addresses barriers to participation on behalf of providers and would be welcome information to drive decisions and policy moving forward.

It has become clear that the private preschool and prekindergarten providers voice was unfortunately missing during the drafting and implementation of Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The passage of HB1475 and subsequent report would be an important step to understanding what changes can be enacted to realize a fully functioning public/private partnership for the provision of high quality prekindergarten for three and four year olds in Maryland.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report on HB1475 from this Committee.