
TO: Ways and Means Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 748 - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten - Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private Providers - Repeal of Deadlines

DATE: February 25, 2026

POSITION: Support with Amendments

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and State Department of Education (MSDE) extends their support for House Bill (HB) 748 - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten - Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private Providers - Repeal of Deadlines, which removes certain deadline requirements in the Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder and sets new timelines for staff to meet required qualifications after being hired.

House Bill 748 provides important flexibility within the Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for eligible private prekindergarten providers by replacing fixed statutory deadlines with reasonable, employment-based timelines. Specifically, with the proposed amendments from the sponsor, the bill allows early childhood teaching assistants to obtain required credentials within 3 months of hire and lead teachers qualifying through the experiential pathway to earn an associate degree within 6 months of qualification.

The transition to the 3-month and 6-month timelines reflects a practical and equitable approach to workforce development and reflects reasonable timeframes for providers to meet educational requirements. These modifications maintain high standards while recognizing the realities of recruitment, retention, and timeframes associated with attaining and receiving documentation of educational qualifications. Importantly, the bill preserves accountability through required credential attainment and mentoring structures while strengthening the long-term stability of Maryland's mixed-delivery prekindergarten system.

The State Board and MSDE request that the committee consider this information as it deliberates HB 748. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at 443-571-5461 or Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov.