

TO: House Ways and Means Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 1373 – State Department of Education - Independent Regulatory Framework for After School and Out of School Time Child Care Programs – Study

DATE: March 11, 2026

POSITION: Information Only

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) offer the following information regarding House Bill (HB) 1373 – State Department of Education - Independent Regulatory Framework for After School and Out of School Time Child Care Programs – Study. HB 1373 requires MSDE to study and make recommendations on establishing an independent regulatory framework for after school and out-of-school time programs and to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by December 1, 2026.

With the focus on the critical role that full-day child care programs play in supporting families and ensuring families can work, too often after school and out-of-school time programs are unintentionally overlooked. When these essential partners are left out of discussions that impact program policy and implementation, their insights and experiences go unheard, limiting progress and weakening the broader child care ecosystem. Recognizing after-school and out-of-school time programs as vital contributors is key to building a more inclusive and responsive child care continuum.

Given this, State Board and MSDE appreciate the intent of HB 1373, recognizing that after school and out-of-school time programs are integral to Maryland’s child care system. Notably, DEC convened a school-age workgroup in 2021 that focused on reducing regulatory barriers for these programs. This workgroup was instrumental in strengthening relationships with school-age providers and creating a dedicated space for them to share concerns unique to their program models, many of which operate in shared environments such as school buildings, where child care licensing approval processes and day-to-day operations differ from traditional child care settings.

However, while MSDE supports the intent of HB 1373, the Department does not believe that a legislatively mandated study is the most appropriate approach at this time. Conducting a comprehensive analysis of a potential independent regulatory framework would require significant time and resources to ensure the work is thoughtful, data-driven, and informed by meaningful engagement with the after school and out-of-school time community. In addition, the Department would need time to procure and onboard a qualified vendor following the bill’s enactment, which would delay the start of the work and limit the ability to complete a high-quality analysis within the proposed timeline.

Given MSDE’s alignment with the intent of the bill, the Department plans to undertake its own review of this issue and pursue potential improvements in the coming years within its existing capacity. Conducting this work internally will allow MSDE to approach the analysis thoughtfully and thoroughly, while ensuring the Department can maintain progress on other ongoing early childhood research and policy priorities.

For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at 443-571-5461 or Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov.