

My name is Randi Albertsen. I own Innovations in Education, LLC. We provide professional development and consulting for early childhood programs. I am testifying in favor of HB 659, State Board of Education – Membership – Early Childhood Development Professional.

Prior to my current position in early childhood education, I taught kindergarten in Montgomery County Public Schools, worked in a childcare center, and was a licensed family childcare provider in Maryland. I would like to share my experience working in public schools and in community-based childcare settings.

My experience has taught me that public schools' policies and practices are very different from those in regulated childcare settings. While public schools and community-based programs fall under the MSDE umbrella, they are not the same. The language and terminology used in public schools differ significantly from those in community-based programs. The regulations are different. The oversight is different. The funding is different. The staff qualifications are different. The workload is different. The length of the workday is different. The interactions and relationships with families are different.

Because MSDE oversees both community-based early childhood programs and LEAs, the State Board of Education oversees both types of settings as well. And yet, there is no representation on the State Board of Education to reflect the voice of community-based early childhood programs.

If the State Board of Education is making recommendations for birth-to-12 education in Maryland, and the composition of the State Board reflects all stakeholders, then it follows that there must be a dedicated seat for an early childhood development professional.

The State Board regularly sets policies that directly impact early childhood programs, yet they currently do so without the input and voice of the early childhood community. Quite often, this leads to policies that are contradictory to developmentally appropriate practices and create unintended consequences for the successful operation of early childhood education programs. A case in point is pillar one from the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. As the AIB makes recommendations to the State Board regarding Pillar 1, there is currently no voice on the Board to share knowledge, experience, and research-based practices that either support or contradict such recommendations. Without this information, the Board sets policies that often do not support and sometimes even harm early childhood education programs.





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To ensure a robust and thriving early care and education industry in Maryland, it is critical to have representation on the State Board of Education. Childcare is the economic linchpin of a thriving society and economy. To ensure the continued viability and success of the childcare industry and the mixed-delivery system in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, I strongly support the inclusion of a seat on the State Board of Education for an early childhood development professional and request a favorable report.

Thank you for your time and continued support of the early childhood community.

