

HOUSE BILL 206

F5

(3lr0447)

ENROLLED BILL

— *Ways and Means/ Education, Energy, and the Environment* —

Introduced by **Delegate Ivey**

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

Proofreader.

Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this

_____ day of _____ at _____ o'clock, _____ M.

Speaker.

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Early Childhood Education – Prekindergarten Programs – Montessori Schools**
3 **and Programs**

4 FOR the purpose of altering the eligibility requirements for the Prekindergarten Expansion
5 Grant Program and publicly funded prekindergarten programs to include certain
6 operational requirements, staff credentials, and student-to-staff ratios for
7 Montessori schools and programs; and generally relating to the inclusion of
8 Montessori schools and programs in prekindergarten programs in the State.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
10 Article – Education
11 Section 7–101.2(a)(1), ~~(5)~~, and ~~(6)~~ and (b)(1) and 7–1A–01(a) and (c) through (e)
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2022 Replacement Volume)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.

Italics indicate opposite chamber / conference committee amendments.



1 BY adding to
 2 Article – Education
 3 Section 7–101.2(a)(5)
 4 Annotated Code of Maryland
 5 (2022 Replacement Volume)

6 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
 7 Article – Education
 8 Section ~~7–101.2(e)~~ 7–101.2(a)(5) and (6) and (c) and 7–1A–04(a)
 9 Annotated Code of Maryland
 10 (2022 Replacement Volume)

11 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
 12 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

13 **Article – Education**

14 7–101.2.

15 (a) (1) In this section the following terms have the meanings indicated.

16 **(5) “MONTESSORI SCHOOL” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 6–127 OF**
 17 **THIS ARTICLE.**

18 ~~(5)~~ **(6)** “Program” means the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant
 19 Program.

20 ~~(6)~~ **(7)** “Qualified provider” means:

21 (i) If partnering with a county board under a memorandum of
 22 understanding, a State accredited or nationally accredited child care program or a
 23 nonpublic school approved by the Department to provide prekindergarten services; and

24 (ii) A county board.

25 (b) (1) There is a grant program known as the Prekindergarten Expansion
 26 Grant Program in the State.

27 (c) **(1) [Before] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS**
 28 **SUBSECTION, BEFORE** approving qualified providers for prekindergarten services to
 29 receive a grant under this section, a qualified provider shall certify to the Department that
 30 for each classroom funded under this section the provider will:

31 **[(1)] (I)** Maintain a student–to–classroom personnel ratio of no more
 32 than 10 to 1 with a maximum of 20 children per classroom;

1 [(2)] (II) Provide in each classroom at least one teacher certified in early
 2 childhood education by the State and at least one teacher's aide who has at least a high
 3 school degree;

4 [(3)] (III) Operate an educational program for:

5 [(i)] 1. 5 days per week;

6 [(ii)] 2. 180 days per year, in accordance with the public school
 7 calendar established by the local school board; and

8 [(iii) 1.] 3. A. For half-day programs, at least 2.5 hours per day;
 9 or

10 [2.] B. For full-day programs, at least 6.5 hours per day;
 11 and

12 [(4)] (IV) To receive a grant under this section, meet the requirements of §
 13 7-1A-04 of this title.

14 (2) BEFORE APPROVING QUALIFIED PROVIDERS WHO ARE
 15 MONTESSORI SCHOOLS OR MONTESSORI PROGRAMS FOR PREKINDERGARTEN
 16 SERVICES TO RECEIVE A GRANT UNDER THIS SECTION, A QUALIFIED PROVIDER
 17 SHALL CERTIFY TO THE DEPARTMENT THAT FOR EACH CLASSROOM FUNDED UNDER
 18 THIS SECTION THE PROVIDER WILL:

19 (I) MEET THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER PARAGRAPH (1)(III) OF
 20 THIS SUBSECTION;

21 (II) MAINTAIN A STUDENT-TO-CLASSROOM PERSONNEL RATIO
 22 OF NO MORE THAN 10 TO 1 ~~FOR STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 5 YEARS AND NO~~
 23 ~~MORE THAN 15 TO 1 FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE AT LEAST 5 YEARS OLD, WITH A~~
 24 MAXIMUM OF 20 STUDENTS PER CLASSROOM IF ALL OF THE STUDENTS ARE UNDER
 25 THE AGE OF 5 YEARS;

26 (III) MAINTAIN A STUDENT-TO-CLASSROOM PERSONNEL RATIO
 27 OF NO MORE THAN 14 TO 1, WITH A MAXIMUM OF 28 STUDENTS PER CLASSROOM IF
 28 SOME OF THE STUDENTS ARE AT LEAST 5 YEARS OLD; AND

29 ~~(III)~~ (IV) REQUIRE A CLASSROOM TEACHER TO ~~BE~~:

30 1. HOLD A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ANY FIELD; AND

31 2. ~~BE CERTIFIED~~ HOLD A MONTESSORI CREDENTIAL

32 ISSUED BY:

1 ~~1. A. THE ASSOCIATION MONTESSORI INTERNATIONALE,~~
 2 ~~USA;~~

3 ~~2. B. THE AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY; OR~~

4 ~~3. C. THE A PROGRAM ACCREDITED BY THE MONTESSORI~~
 5 ~~ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR TEACHER EDUCATION.~~

6 7–1A–01.

7 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

8 (c) “Eligible prekindergarten provider” includes an:

9 (1) Eligible public provider; and

10 (2) Eligible private provider.

11 (d) (1) “Eligible private provider” means a community–based early learning
 12 program that:

13 (i) Is licensed in the State;

14 (ii) Does not charge more tuition for full–day prekindergarten than
 15 the cost of quality; and

16 (iii) Meets the requirements under § 7–1A–04 of this subtitle.

17 (2) “Eligible private provider” includes the Ulysses Currie Head Start
 18 Program under § 5–231 of this article.

19 (e) “Eligible public provider” means an early learning program that:

20 (1) Is provided by a county board at a public school; and

21 (2) Meets the requirements under § 7–1A–04 of this subtitle.

22 7–1A–04.

23 (a) **(1) [All] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS**
 24 **SUBSECTION, ALL** eligible prekindergarten providers shall include structural elements
 25 that are evidence–based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program
 26 quality, including:

27 **[(1)] (I)** Beginning in the 2025–2026 school year:

- 1 **[(i)] 1.** High staff qualifications, including teachers who, at a
2 minimum, hold:
- 3 **[1.] A.** State certification for teaching in early childhood
4 education; or
- 5 **[2.] B.** A bachelor’s degree in any field and are pursuing
6 residency through the Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program, which
7 includes early childhood coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of pedagogical content
8 knowledge; and
- 9 **[(ii)] 2.** Teaching assistants who have at least:
- 10 **[1.] A.** A Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate; or
11 **[2.] B.** An associate’s degree;
- 12 **[(2)] (II)** Professional development for all staff;
- 13 **[(3)] (III)** A student–to–classroom personnel ratio of no more than 10 to 1
14 in each class;
- 15 **[(4)] (IV)** Class sizes of no more than 20 students per classroom;
- 16 **[(5)] (V)** A full–day prekindergarten program;
- 17 **[(6)] (VI)** Inclusion of students with disabilities to ensure access to and full
18 participation in all program opportunities;
- 19 **[(7)] (VII)** For at least 1 year before a student’s enrollment in kindergarten,
20 learning environments that:
- 21 **[(i)] 1.** Are aligned with State Early Learning and Development
22 Standards;
- 23 **[(ii)] 2.** Use evidence–based curricula; and
- 24 **[(iii)] 3.** Use instruction methods that are:
- 25 **[1.] A.** Developmentally appropriate; and
- 26 **[2.] B.** Culturally and linguistically responsive;
- 27 **[(8)] (VIII)** Individualized accommodations and supports for all students;

1 [(9)] (IX) Instructional staff salaries and benefits that are comparable to
 2 the salaries and benefits of instructional staff employed by the county board of the county
 3 in which the early learning program is located;

4 [(10)] (X) Program evaluation to ensure continuous program improvement;

5 [(11)] (XI) On-site or accessible comprehensive services for students;

6 [(12)] (XII) Community partnerships that promote access to comprehensive
 7 services for families of students; and

8 [(13)] (XIII) Evidence-based health and safety standards.

9 (2) AN ELIGIBLE PREKINDERGARTEN PROVIDER THAT IS A
 10 MONTESSORI SCHOOL OR MONTESSORI PROGRAM SHALL INCLUDE ALL OF THE
 11 STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS LISTED IN PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION EXCEPT
 12 THE FOLLOWING:

13 (I) FOR STAFF QUALIFICATIONS, THE ELIGIBLE
 14 PREKINDERGARTEN PROVIDER SHALL EMPLOY TEACHERS WHO ~~ARE~~:

15 1. HOLD A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ANY FIELD; AND

16 2. ~~ARE CERTIFIED~~ HOLD A MONTESSORI CREDENTIAL
 17 ISSUED BY:

18 ~~1.~~ A. THE ASSOCIATION MONTESSORI INTERNATIONALE,
 19 USA;

20 ~~2.~~ B. THE AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY; OR

21 ~~3.~~ C. ~~THE~~ A PROGRAM ACCREDITED BY THE MONTESSORI
 22 ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR TEACHER EDUCATION; AND

23 (II) FOR THE STUDENT-TO-CLASSROOM PERSONNEL RATIO,
 24 THE PREKINDERGARTEN PROVIDER SHALL MAINTAIN A STUDENT-TO-CLASSROOM
 25 PERSONNEL RATIO OF ~~NO~~:

26 1. NO MORE THAN 10 TO 1 ~~FOR STUDENTS UNDER THE~~
 27 ~~AGE OF 5 YEARS AND NO MORE THAN 15 TO 1 FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE AT LEAST 5~~
 28 ~~YEARS OLD, WITH A MAXIMUM OF 20 STUDENTS PER CLASSROOM IF ALL OF THE~~
 29 ~~STUDENTS ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 5 YEARS; AND~~

