

SB 533 – Education- Teacher Certification- Montessori Schools –
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Senator Smith

February 13, 2020

Position: Support

The Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies supports SB 533. There are at least 6 public Montessori schools in Maryland, three of which are public charter schools located in Frederick County and Baltimore City. There are also three public district-run Montessori schools in Prince George’s County. Montessori schools have served as strong contributors to Maryland’s public school system and have produced strong academic results. These schools also provide additional educational options for parents who might otherwise have considered private education and serve three and four year olds in communities where it is difficult for families to access affordable early childhood programming.

Identifying qualified teachers who are trained in the Montessori method and meet Maryland’s teaching certification remains a challenge for many Montessori schools. The pipeline for these teachers is strained in the public sector due to the double certification requirement. Currently, Maryland’s certification process does not recognize the Montessori credential. Current law for public charter schools states that *“A member of the professional staff of a public charter school shall be subject to the same certification provisions established in regulations for the professional staff of other public schools.”* As such, teachers are required to take significant additional coursework on top of their Montessori teaching credential. This serves as a burden to highly qualified teaching professionals and precludes many from the ability to teach in the state’s public Montessori programs. As such, we support the language in SB 533 making an individual eligible for certification to teach students in a Montessori school as stated in this bill.

The Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies is a Montessori teacher education program located in Silver Spring, MD. We offer training at the Infant and Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary II and Administration levels. Our program began in 1980 and we work with adult learners who will be teaching in public and private school settings annually. The program is accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) and affiliated by the American Montessori Society (AMS). The training offered through the Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies consists of a 13-15 month academic portion as well as a 9-month practicum/student teaching experience. This comprehensive program covers information about Montessori philosophy, materials, classroom leadership and child development. Graduates complete the program with a solid understanding of Montessori education and teaching in a Montessori setting.

We urge a positive report on SB 533. Thank you for your consideration.



Thank you
Hilary Green
Director
Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies