

Written Support**Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee*****Senate Bill 533 – Education – Teacher Certification – Montessori Schools*****Sara C. Fidler, President**sfidler@micua.org**February 18, 2020**

On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 65,600 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of ***Senate Bill 533 – Education – Teacher Certification – Montessori Schools***. This legislation specifies requirements under which teacher candidates would be eligible for certification to teach in public Montessori schools in Maryland. These requirements would include a bachelor's degree and a valid credential from the American Montessori Society, Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), or completion of a program accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE). The bill also requires a passing score on a qualifying teacher examination as determined by the State Board of Education.

Loyola University Maryland is a national leader in Montessori education. The University has a long-standing relationship with several AMI approved training centers for Montessori teachers, including the Washington Montessori Institute, which is the oldest AMI approved training center in North America. Loyola University Maryland also has off-site AMI training center partners in Houston, Atlanta, Portland, San Diego, San Francisco, St. Louis, Phoenix, Decatur, Ashton, and Denver. Through its Center for Montessori Education, Loyola offers two pathways to a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Montessori Studies. The Concurrent M.Ed. track is offered in partnership with a select group of AMI institutes. Candidates begin their M.Ed. simultaneously with their Montessori teacher training at one of Loyola's off-site partner institutes. The capstone education courses are then completed over a four-week summer intensive program at Loyola's campus in Baltimore. The Post-Diploma M.Ed. track allows experienced Montessori teachers to grow their experience beyond their initial training and enhance their career trajectories.

Senate Bill 533 creates a direct pathway for these program completers to become State certified to teach in a public Montessori school in Maryland. The bill would help these teachers enter the classroom more quickly at the conclusion of their training programs. It would reduce expenses and redundancies related to additional coursework currently required for State certification on

top of the Montessori content, methods, and pedagogy training they have already completed. If a Montessori teacher certified under the requirements of this bill later decided to teach in a non-Montessori public school in Maryland, then he or she would have to meet any alternative State requirements, as applicable, to become a certified teacher.

There are approximately 20,000 Montessori schools around the world, including 5,000 in the United States. Among these schools in the U.S., more than 500 are public schools. Maryland currently offers a diverse array of public and private Montessori school options, which continue to grow in enrollment and popularity. AMI or MACTE approved Montessori training institutes, such as those with which Loyola is affiliated, prepare candidates to become effective and authentic Montessori teachers. Providing a more direct pathway to Maryland State teacher certification upon completion of such programs will help ensure that Montessori schools will continue to flourish as an option for Maryland students and families.

For all of these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for Senate Bill 533.