



Jolene Ivey

Council
Member
District 5

**Testimony Concerning HB 467
Education-Teacher Certification Montessori Schools
Submitted to Ways & Means
February 7, 2022**

Position: Support

As a Montessori parent, I have experienced firsthand the impact that our public Montessori schools had on my own children and their classmates. Montessori schooling nurtures not only traditional academic skills, but also leadership, independence, confidence, and emotional skills that create a vital foundation for future learning and growth.

Our two sons who were students in one of the Prince George's County's Public School Montessori schools both passed the test to enter Eleanor Roosevelt's Science and Technology program, and both went on to the University of Maryland. Their Montessori education helped lay the groundwork for them to be strong, independent learners and critical thinkers.

As a member of the Prince George's County Council, I know that the Prince George's County Montessori programs have always been in high demand. In 2010 the county expanded from two to three public Montessori schools serving children pre-K through grade 8; even so, these programs continue to have long waiting lists.

Properly trained Montessori teachers are the cornerstone of these programs. Unfortunately, in Maryland there is not currently a pathway to state teacher licensure for Montessori teachers, which creates problems in hiring for our public Montessori programs. Our Montessori schools have difficulties finding individuals who are both Montessori trained and who have a state teaching license. The result is that our Montessori classrooms have teachers leading those classrooms who are not Montessori trained, and the schools need to spend significant resources to get the teachers properly trained. Montessori teacher preparation requires a significant time investment from the teacher, and in the meantime, the students lose out.

Maryland children deserve to have properly trained, highly qualified teachers in their classrooms. HB467 will help assure this by helping Montessori trained teachers achieve certification. Montessori teachers hold a bachelor's degree and then complete rigorous teacher education, which includes graduate level coursework and a significant practicum. We have assurances about the quality of their teacher preparation because these programs are accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit Montessori teacher education programs.

Ten other states have a pathway to licensure for Montessori teachers and I urge Maryland to follow their lead.

Sincerely,