



**Mohammed Choudhury**  
State Superintendent of Schools

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**BILL:** House Bill 0525 **DATE:** FEBRUARY 15, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Outdoor Preschool License Pilot Program - Establishment **COMMITTEE:** WAYS AND MEANS

**POSITION:** Favorable with Amendments

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The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) supports with amendments House Bill 525: Outdoor Preschool License Pilot Program – Establishment.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions and establishes an ambitious goal of a mixed-delivery pre-kindergarten system in which public and private providers share 50% and 50% of the market. The bill, as proposed, presents a pilot option that MSDE hopes Maryland can leverage to support innovative approaches to delivering high-quality pre-kindergarten access throughout the State.

The bill, as drafted, would allow MSDE to follow suit as with precedence from, for example, the State of Washington who likewise implemented a pilot program. MSDE, in learning from this experience, will need time to curate programs in Maryland’s various jurisdictions who are able and willing to embark on the pilot.

In addition, as part of the proposed pilot program, MSDE will need to develop separate regulations and/or waive existing regulations, and an application process and other supporting documents, forms and resources necessary for a private provider to open an outdoor preschool. Once the regulations, an application, and other supporting documents are developed, the agency will need to process the applications, license the programs, and maintain the data requests included in the legislation.

Once licensed, the pilot programs will then be eligible to participate in Maryland EXCELS. The Maryland EXCELS standards will not need to be adapted to support the pilot programs participation. Maryland EXCELS is a core feature of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future mandate for raising the quality of early childhood education statewide. Furthermore, participation in Maryland EXCELS will allow for the pilot programs to receive child care scholarship reimbursement.

For that reason, MSDE urges a favorable report on House Bill 525 with the sponsor amendments that incorporate the amended timeline adding an extra year to launch the pilot so that MSDE can properly promulgate and adopt necessary regulatory changes. MSDE stands ready to begin moving toward pilot implementation.

Please contact Justin Dayhoff, at 410-767-0439, or [justin.dayhoff@maryland.gov](mailto:justin.dayhoff@maryland.gov), for any additional information.