

Written Support**House Ways and Means Committee*****HB 1002 – Education – Teacher Certification – Montessori Schools*****Tina M. Bjarekull, MICUA President****March 7, 2018**

On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 64,000 students they serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of ***HB 1002 – Education – Teacher Certification – Montessori Schools***. This legislation specifies requirements under which teacher candidates are eligible for certification to teach in public Montessori schools in Maryland. These requirements include successful completion of a teacher education program accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) or approved by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI); successful completion of a State Board approved class on the special education curriculum and the introduction to reading curriculum; and successfully passing a qualifying examination as determined by the State Board.

Loyola University Maryland houses the Washington Montessori Institute, which is the oldest AMI approved training center for Montessori teachers in North America. The Washington Montessori Institute is also accredited by MACTE for its primary and elementary Montessori teacher education programs. Loyola University Maryland enrolls Montessori teacher candidates from across the nation and around the world, with off-site training partners in Houston, Atlanta, Milwaukee, Portland, San Diego, San Francisco, St. Louis, Phoenix, Decatur, and Denver. All of these training programs incorporate a four-week summer session on Loyola's Evergreen campus.

Further, through its Center for Montessori Education, Loyola offers graduate degree options for both new and experienced Montessori teachers and administrators. These include the Concurrent Master of Education (M.Ed.), which allows Montessori teacher candidates to complete their AMI training while earning graduate credits toward an M.Ed.; the Post-AMI-Diploma M.Ed., which allows experienced Montessori teachers to build on their experience beyond their initial training and enhance their career trajectories; and the Post-Master's Certification in Administration and Supervision, which is designed to meet the growing need for Montessori school program administrators who have both Montessori qualifications and leadership qualifications.

HB 1002 creates a direct pathway for program completers from MACTE accredited or AMI approved programs, such as those offered by the Washington Montessori Institute at Loyola, to become State certified to teach in a public Montessori school in Maryland. These teachers would not have to complete the additional course requirements for certification to teach in a non-Montessori public school, as they must currently. Montessori teacher candidates would still be required to complete coursework in special education and reading as well as pass any qualifying examinations, as specified in the bill. This bill would help Montessori teachers enter the classroom more quickly at the conclusion of their training programs and would reduce expenses related to additional coursework on top of the Montessori content, methods, and pedagogy training they have already received. 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 the additional State requirements, as applicable, to become a certified teacher.

Currently, 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. Likewise, Maryland currently offers a diverse array of public and private Montessori school options, which continue to grow in enrollment and popularity. Programs such as those offered by the Washington Montessori Institute at Loyola 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 in the public sector as an option for Maryland students and families.

For all of these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for House Bill 1002.