

BILL: Senate Bill 369
TITLE: Education - Prekindergarten Programs - Notification of Eligibility by
Local Departments of Social Services
DATE: March 24, 2016
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's local boards of education, supports Senate Bill 369.

MABE supports this legislation in order to help ensure that parents are fully informed by local departments of health or social services about their eligibility for publicly funded prekindergarten based on household income.

Under current law, all children who are four years old on September 1 of that school year, who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals (FRPM) (i.e., from families whose income is at or below 185% of federal poverty guidelines (FPG)), and whose parent or guardian seeks to enroll the child in a public prekindergarten program, must be admitted free of charge to publicly funded prekindergarten programs established by each of the local boards of education.

State regulations require local school systems to provide prekindergarten for a minimum of 2.5 hours per day using certified early education teachers. Many school systems, in addition to the mandated half-day programs, also provide a significant amount of full-day prekindergarten to eligible students.

Again, MABE supports this legislation in order to inform the greatest number of parents and guardians of their opportunity to enroll their children in high quality public prekindergarten programs.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 369.