

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

October 16, 2018

Secretary Alex M. Azar  
Department of Health and Human Services  
330 C Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Secretary Azar:

We are pleased to support the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) application for the Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five program. As a convener of state and local entities working to improve the availability and quality of early childhood care and education programs in Maryland, the MSDE is positioned to conduct a statewide, comprehensive birth through five needs assessment.

Maryland has been forward thinking in centralizing the majority of its early childhood programs in a mixed delivery system at the MSDE, where the Division of Early Childhood and the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services coordinate and collaborate on a full range of care and education programs, services, and funding streams. These include Child Care, Head Start collaboration, State Pre-K, Title I preschool, State-funded home visiting, and special education services for infants and toddlers and their families and preschool-age children.

The MSDE stands out among state education departments nation-wide for its focus on "equity and excellence" and ensuring the seamless transition of children between early childhood programs and from such programs to elementary school, especially for low-income and disadvantaged children. This new funding opportunity would allow Maryland to build on and leverage the successes from local, state and federal investments.

We encourage you to give the State of Maryland's application for a Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five grant favorable consideration.

Sincerely,



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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

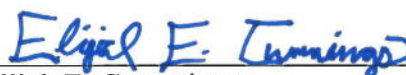


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cc: Secretary Betsy DeVos, United States Department of Education