



Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Delegate Alonzo T. Washington, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
Annapolis, MD 21401

March 4, 2022

Bill: House Bill 1231 – Public Schools - Student Health Professional Retention Program - Established

Position: Support

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic well-being of students and families across the state.

We support this bill because there are significant shortages of student health providers. As was discussed multiple times during the debates on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, student health is strongly linked to education outcomes. In particular the Blueprint recognized the need for increased behavioral health services. The 2019 report from the Commission on Innovation & Excellence in Education stated:

“Providing access to behavioral health programming and services assumes increasing the ratio of guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, etc. to industry - recognized ratios: 500-700 students per psychologist, 400 students per social worker, and 250 students per guidance counselor.”ⁱ

Although the commission was basing their assumptions on schools having more behavioral health providers, our schools are still nowhere close to industry recognized ratios. There is no county in Maryland that is at the appropriate ratio for school psychologists. A report in response to HB 844 ('19) found that several counties have one school psychologist for more than 1,000 students.ⁱⁱ

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 293. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please contact us at legislative@mSPAonline.org or Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net or (443) 350-1325.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Phipps, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP
Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association

ⁱ <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5300/sc5339/000113/023600/023691/20190075e.pdf>

ⁱⁱ [Summary from MSPA of school psychology ratio data in provided in response to HB0844 \(2019\)](#)