



SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Senate Bill 893:

Maryland Educator Shortage Reduction Act of 2023

OFFERED ON BEHALF OF

The Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities
(MANSEF)

BEFORE THE

Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
March 7, 2023

The Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities (MANSEF) offers this testimony in SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT of SB 893 on behalf of the 70 special education schools across Maryland currently serving approximately 3500 publicly funded school children. Our member schools employ over 1500 teachers, clinicians, and administrators.

The State is facing a critical shortage of teachers, and this is also applicable to the special education placement schools. Our members are required to comply with COMAR 13A.09.10.

SB 893 is necessary to advance the State's efforts to increase the teacher workforce. Every aspect of this bill overlaps and impacts on the recruitment and retention efforts of our members. While the many initiatives outlined will help alleviate some of challenges facing public schools, so, too, are those challenges faced in the special education programs. Therefore, MANSEF respectfully offers to amend the bill to ensure equity and fairness by including the special education placement schools to safeguard that those individuals wishing to teach our most vulnerable students have the same opportunities as their public school counterparts.

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) mandates a "continuum of alternative placements to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services." Specifically, the Code of Federal Regulations cite: "instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions." (34 CFR 300.115 and 34 CFR 300.39). The MANSEF special education schools are an extension of the public schools and fulfill an essential function in meeting students' particular educational needs.

The current workforce shortage must be addressed for us to continue to meet the high expectations of IDEA and the expectations entrusted to us by local education agencies. In response to the critical shortage of teachers, MANSEF is partnering with the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) to create an alternative teacher education program. This program would support conditional/provisional teachers employed by MANSEF member schools as they complete the required Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) coursework to earn their Standard Professional Certification.

It is for these reasons that MANSEF respectfully requests that special education placement schools approved under COMAR 13A.09.10 be included in any and all initiatives undertaken by the Department to ensure all children are receiving the most appropriate educational experience.

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