

## Testimony in Support with Amendments to Senate Bill 668 Teacher Degree Apprenticeship

Senate Finance Committee  
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The Maryland State Education Association supports, with amendments, Senate Bill 668, which would establish the Teacher Apprenticeship Startup Grant Program in the Maryland Department of Labor, require a sponsor participating in a teacher apprenticeship program to establish a paid apprenticeship that develops certain career paths in education, and require a sponsor to develop a high school level apprenticeship in coordination with the CTE Committee. This legislation would also authorize the Department to award up to \$500,000 to a sponsor for the development and launch of a teacher apprenticeship program.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Maryland public schools reported a staggering 2,572 vacancies on the first day of the 2022-2023 school year, and there is an increasingly urgent need to scale programs that encourage young people to consider and train for careers in public education.<sup>1</sup> Apprenticeships are proven as an effective, equitable approach to strengthening the education workforce. Last year, U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh and U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona issued joint guidance urging states to

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<sup>1</sup>Regulations Deep Dive: Educator Preparation and Licensure Updates. Maryland State Department of Education (January 2023).

<https://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2023/0124/RegulationsDeepDiveEducatorPreparationLicensureJan2023.pdf>



develop Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) to address widespread educator shortages.<sup>2</sup> To achieve to promising outcomes we know apprenticeships can yield, we want to ensure the program proposed in this bill is implemented with the full buy-in of all sponsors, in a manner that reflects the need for additional teachers and paraeducators, and in coordination with existing efforts to strengthen the pipeline.

We therefore propose the following amendments:

- (1) Changing the language on page 2, lines 5-6 to read “DEVELOP A COHORT OF INDIVIDUALS QUALIFIED TO WORK AS TEACHERS **AND PARAEDUCATORS** IN THE STATE” to reflect the concurrent need for qualified education support professionals.
- (2) Striking the language specifying that a sponsor shall consist of “at least one union representing school employees” to ensure that participation by unions is voluntary.
- (3) Requiring that a sponsor coordinate with the State Department of Education to ensure an effective partnership between the teacher apprenticeship programs established by this bill and any existing Grow-Your-Own programs or grant-funded efforts.

We have supported investments in educator training for aspiring educators enrolled in teacher preparation programs and for career changers working to become certificated teachers. This legislation presents a unique approach that would help high school students earn dual enrollment credits and appeal to those considering a career in public education.

**With the inclusion of the proposed amendments, we urge the Committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 668.**

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<sup>2</sup> Joint Dear Colleague Letter (August 2022). <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/sites/default/files/22-0119-joint-dcl-signed-ed.pdf>