

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 377
Higher Education - Teacher Development and Retention Program - Definition

House Appropriations Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 377, which would expand the definition of "institution of initial eligibility" to include community colleges as eligible institutions for applicants for the Teacher Development and Retention 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).

In the 2023 legislative session, this body made a landmark investment in the educator pipeline by establishing the Teacher Development and Retention Program as part of HB 1219 – the Maryland Educator Shortage Reduction Act. This program offers support and stipends, including an up-to-\$20,000 practicum year stipend, for aspiring educators in their first or second year at an eligible institution of higher education. Eligible institutions are defined as those with at least 40% of students receiving federal Pell grants. Of the nine institutions currently eligible, there are two community colleges: Garrett College and Wor-Wic Community College.

Students are increasingly choosing to begin their post-secondary studies at one of Maryland's 16 community colleges.¹ Many choose to attend community college to save money; the Maryland Association of Community Colleges reports that students who complete two years at a community college and transfer to a 4-year institution can save up to \$10,000 on tuition.² Others may use their time at their local community college to explore career pathways before transferring to complete a bachelor's degree, which makes the recruitment-focused Teacher Development and Retention Program an especially good fit for community college settings.

¹ Community College Enrollment Is Up Nationwide, Maryland Numbers Are Encouraging. Maryland Association of Counties: Conduit Street (September 2023). <https://conduitstreet.mdcounties.org/2023/09/19/community-college-enrollment-is-up-nationwide-maryland-numbers-are-encouraging/#:~:text=In%20the%20fall%20of%202022,news%20for%20Maryland's%20community%20colleges.>

² Fast Facts. Maryland Association of Community Colleges (Accessed January 2024). <https://mdacc.org/fast-facts/>



Paid teaching internships like those available through the Teacher Development and Retention Program are a powerful tool to recruit and retain the next generation of aspiring educators. Extending eligibility to all students who begin their studies at one of Maryland's community colleges would multiply the program's impact and invite candidates who may not have considered teaching to commit to a career in public education.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 377.