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**TO:** Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee  
**BILL:** Senate Bill (SB) 771 – **Education – Initial Teacher Certification – Requirements**  
**DATE:** February 23, 2024  
**POSITION:** Support with Amendments

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The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) support **Senate Bill (SB) 771 – Education – Initial Teacher Certification – Requirements**, with amendments.

The State Board and MSDE are dedicated to ensuring that Maryland students have access to a highly qualified and diverse teacher workforce. In alignment with the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Pillar II, which focuses on high-quality and diverse teachers and leaders, MSDE’s [Strategic Plan](#) provides a map for elevating the stature of the teaching profession by intentionally working to attract, recruit, and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce; setting rigorous standards for educator preparation programs and induction; and implementing a career ladder system focused on development and growth opportunities for all educators.

MSDE supports the use of multiple measures for meeting standards, given that each measure reasonable provides an equivalent demonstration that the standard has been met. In this case, we support the use of multiple measures for teacher candidates to demonstrate the competencies required of a high-quality workforce without lowering or removing standards and are therefore supportive of what we believe to be the fundamental intent of the bill.

The State Board and MSDE are not advocating for comprehensive changes to the core structure of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. However, we believe there are opportunities in this bill to make necessary course corrections that align to the current experience with the educator pipeline and workforce in Maryland.

As introduced, MSDE has concerns with SB 771 merging the concepts related to competencies associated with basic knowledge (i.e., reading, writing, math) and pedagogy. Measures that demonstrate basic knowledge should not be conflated with measures that demonstrate teaching ability. Additionally, SB 771 amends the initial certification requirements to remove the need to demonstrate the skills required to provide evidence-based reading instruction. The State Board and MSDE are dedicated to ensuring that every teacher in Maryland is proficient in teaching reading using evidence-based instructional strategies aligned with the science of reading.

We have been collaborating with the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) leadership on a framework for recommended changes to SB 771. We appreciate AIB’s partnership and willingness to collaborate on this crucial topic and the joint effort to build this framework.

In our framework, you will see more specific considerations on various portions of the bill. We stand ready to work with the committee, the bill sponsors, the AIB, and stakeholders to discuss these amendments further.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **SB 771**. Please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne, Executive Director of Government Affairs, Education Policy, and Government Relations, at [Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov](mailto:Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov) or at 410-767-0504 or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at [Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov](mailto:Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov) or at 443-915-6094, if you would like any additional information.