

**Written Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
SB 545 - Primary and Secondary Education - Public School Employees - Salaries
February 28, 2024**

SUPPORT

Chair Feldman and members of the Committee, AFT-Maryland asks for a favorable report on SB 545, which proposes to alter the minimum salary for certain public school employees. It recognizes the critical importance of fair compensation for educators and the significant impact it has on the quality of education provided to our students.

The inclusion of an alternative high-quality educator credential, which recognizes educators who meet rigorous standards in professional fields or specialties that do not have National Board Certification (NBC) standards. This provision ensures that educators across various disciplines are valued and fairly compensated for their expertise and dedication to their profession.

The proposal to increase the minimum salary for all public school employees to \$60,000, is a vital step towards ensuring that educators are compensated fairly for their essential role in shaping the future of our society. A competitive salary not only attracts and retains talented individuals in the teaching profession but also reflects the value we place on the critical work they do.

Furthermore, the provision for salary increases for qualified educators, including a \$10,000 salary increase for those awarded an NBC or alternative high-quality educator credential, and a \$7,000 increase for educators assigned to low-performing schools, demonstrates a commitment to addressing inequities in education and supporting educators in challenging environments.

I appreciate the attention given to ensuring that qualified educators who are eligible for multiple salary increases under the bill will receive all applicable increases, and that educators who receive a salary increase for teaching at a low-performing school will not lose that increase if the school's performance improves.

SB 545 represents a significant investment in our public education system and the professionals who dedicate their careers to our students. Thank you.

