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**TO:** House Ways and Means Committee  
**BILL:** Senate Bill (SB) 0771 – Education – Initial Teacher Certification – Requirements  
**DATE:** March 27, 2024  
**POSITION:** Support

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The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) extend their support for **Senate Bill (SB) 0771 Education – Initial Teacher Certification – Requirements**.

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, the State Board and MSDE [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.

The State Board and MSDE support alternative measures for teacher candidates to demonstrate the competencies required of a high-quality workforce. Senate Bill 0771 establishes multiple means for teacher candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of skills associated with basic literacy skills and pedagogy, while ensuring that rigorous standards are maintained, including the requirements that every teacher in Maryland is proficient in teaching reading using evidence-based instructional strategies aligned with the science of reading.

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 through this bill to make necessary course corrections that align to the current experience with the educator pipeline and workforce in Maryland.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **SB 0771**. Please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne, Executive Director of Government Affairs, Education Policy, and External 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.