



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: HB 789

TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education - Public School Employees - Job Duties and Salaries

DATE: February 14, 2024

POSITION: Support with Amendments

COMMITTEE: House Ways and Means Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports** House Bill 789 with amendments.

This bill generally aligns the salary requirements for certificated public school employees who are not eligible for salary increases under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future due to their subject matter not having a National Board Certification (NBC) standard by establishing an "alternative high-quality educator credential," as further specified in the bill. Initial potential salary increases take effect as early as fiscal 2025, subject to approval of the career ladder by the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) and approval of "alternative high-quality educator credentials." Further, by July 1, 2026 (fiscal 2027), the minimum salary for all certificated public school employees must be \$60,000.

PSSAM strongly supports this legislation's recognition of the important role all educators and staff play in the success of our students. We also support the salary increases for these additional employees who currently are not covered by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. While we greatly appreciate the funding limitations of the State and local governments to cover all employees under the Blueprint, the very public salary differentials have affected the harmony and ecosystems in school buildings. In addition, many systems have "me too" clauses that require similar salary increases and benefits among the bargaining units; however, these "other" units are not covered in the Blueprint, and we do not receive funding for them. This has put pressure on our salary scales and may require a shift in how local school systems bargain future contracts.

Therefore, we can only support this legislation with an amendment to mandate the identical funding formula currently used for NBC teachers, as well as those included in the expanded group to receive the \$60,000 starting salary by July 1, 2026. Without these provisions, the bill poses an extraordinary unfunded mandate on school systems and their local government funding partners.

Again, we support all State efforts to attract and retain teachers and staff. We also value the respective national certifications and education attainments by every public school employee and hope that future State and local funding can be identified to provide the highest compensation possible for all school employees.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** House Bill 789 with an amendment to mandate State funding and requests a **favorable amendment report**.