

SB 238 – School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 18, 2026
Position: FAVORABLE

Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) is a nonprofit education and advocacy organization that brings together consumers, families, clinicians, advocates and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as behavioral health). We appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of SB 238.

SB 238 would enter Maryland into the School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact. This would allow school psychologists licensed in states that are part of the Compact to work in Maryland, and Maryland psychologists to work in those same states. The Interstate Compact was established by the Council of State Governments, the Department of Defense, and the National Association of School Psychologists. To date, seven states have enacted legislation to join the Compact.

Data from a 2024 state assessment of Maryland's behavioral health workforce highlights an escalating crisis in access to care. According to the report¹, today's workforce of 34,600 behavioral health professionals is 34% smaller than necessary to meet current demand, requiring an immediate influx of 18,200 individuals. An additional 14,600 workers will be required to replace those leaving the field by 2028, requiring a doubling of current capacity in just the next few years to keep pace with need.

The workforce shortage in Maryland is especially acute in the field of school psychologists. The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a psychologist to student ratio of 1:500. In 2022-23, Maryland's ratio was 1:1,053. Twenty states had a better ratio than Maryland. Those with the worst ratios were concentrated in the south: Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia and Florida.²

The shortage of school psychologists is particularly concerning given the current crisis in youth mental health. Data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 2022-23 shows that 28% of Maryland high school students and 22% of middle school students reported that their mental health was not good most of the time or always, and 18% of high school students and 24% of middle school students reported that they had seriously considered suicide.³ The state must implement every possible measure to better support the mental health of Maryland's young people.

¹ *Investing in Maryland's Behavioral Health Talent*. Maryland Health Care Commission. October 2024.
https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/plr/plr/documents/2024/md_bh_workforce_rpt_SB283.pdf

² National Association of School Psychologist Policy Platform (2024). <https://www.nasponline.org/about-school-psychology/state-shortages-data-dashboard>

³ Maryland Department of Health releases 2022-2023 Youth Risk Behavioral Survey and Youth Tobacco Survey data. Maryland Department of Health. June 25, 2024.
<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/ccdpc/Reports/Pages/YRBS-2022-2023.aspx>

Enacting legislation that allows Maryland to enter a School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact is one such step. Interstate licensure compacts increase access to care by adding depth to local labor pools. Maryland has already entered into several health care licensure compacts.⁴ School psychologists should be added to the list.

For these reasons, MHAMD supports SB 238 and urges a favorable report.

⁴ The Council of State Governments. Interstate Compact Briefing (October, 2025).
https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/meeting_material/2025/frc%20-%20134037364771846501%20-%20Maryland%20Interstate%20Compact%20Briefing%20-%20CSG.pdf