
**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1074
Education – Collective Bargaining – Certificated Employees – Class Size**

**House Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 1074, legislation that removes negotiations related to class size as a prohibited subject of bargaining between boards of education and exclusive bargaining representatives.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for the careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Class size matters. It matters to high-achieving and low-achieving students alike. It matters to classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. It matters when it comes to managing classrooms and addressing student discipline. It matters in the development of relationships with students and their families. It is a huge factor in working and learning conditions, and yet current Maryland law prohibits the matter from even being discussed at the bargaining table when decisions are being made about staffing programs and compensating educators.

Some states have adopted one-size-fits-all caps by grade level. Some have adopted rules around average class sizes. Some have focused on student-to-teacher ratios. And others have allowed for the issue to be part of union negotiations. There are pluses and minuses to all of these approaches; but House Bill 1074 creates the most prudent path forward in addressing this significant issue. It allows educators to be part of solving the competition for resources between staffing and compensation; and it allows for that answer to be different depending on the circumstances in each district—and, theoretically, different by grade level or school in a particular district.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future creates a new funding formula on a per pupil basis that includes new dollars in the foundation amount to support both pay raises and increased staffing. As the Blueprint is phased in and districts seek unique solutions for the challenges in their schools, including class size as a subject of bargaining will allow for the most district-specific solutions available to best meet the learning conditions for students and working conditions for educators.

There is hardly anything as fundamental to creating an effective learning environment as the number of students in a classroom, and as such, class size should join other topics of bargaining in future negotiations. **MSEA urges a favorable report on House Bill 1074.**