



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,
Appropriations Committee
March 3, 2021**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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**HB0918: FAVORABLE W/AMENDMENT
Higher Education - Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program -
Underrepresented Teachers**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **HB0918 Higher Education - Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Underrepresented Teachers** for its recognition of the critical importance of an instructional staff that is reflective of our students and community.

HB0918 establishes a loan repayment program for diverse demographics sought in the teaching field, such as black, Latino, male and other historically underrepresented groups. The program would pay at least 12.5% of existing higher education loans for individuals who received a graduate, professional or undergraduate degree within Maryland, or completed an alternative teacher preparation program, and has been employed for at least two years in a Maryland public school that is low-performing, has a high concentration of students living in poverty, or has large achievement gaps between subpopulations of students. The State's Office of Student Financial Assistance would determine additional qualifications and parameters.

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) strives to achieve workforce diversity in all schools for our students and employees to experience and respect cultural awareness and inclusion. While several parameters are not defined within the bill for purposes of determining how much this effort may directly support HCPSS recruitment and retention, efforts to convince underrepresented groups to pursue teaching regardless of district in Maryland means a larger pool of such educational professionals for the future.

In an effort to address the need for diversity in positions throughout the school system, the Board recommends amending HB0918 to strike the requirement that eligibility is limited to "a teacher in a public school in the State that is low-performing, has a high concentration of students living in poverty, or has large achievement gaps between subpopulations of students" in lines 8 through 10 on page 3. The individuals recruited under the bill need to be recruited for positions beyond low-performing or high poverty schools with school boards having flexibility in making assignments that serve both the needs of students and the professional growth of the teacher.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report of HB0918 from this Committee with the above amendment.