



SUPPORT

Senate Bill 958:

Nonpublic Special Education Schools - State Contribution - Increase

OFFERED ON BEHALF OF

The Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities
(MANSEF)

BEFORE THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAX

March 19, 2021

The Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities (MANSEF) offers this testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 958. We offer this testimony on behalf of the 70 nonpublic special education schools across Maryland currently serving approximately 3800 publicly funded school children. Our member schools employ over 1500 teachers, clinicians and administrators.

Senate Bill 958 will help to align teacher salaries for those working in the nonpublic special education schools to that of their public school counterparts. Retaining skilled teachers continues to be a challenge and we cannot keep pace to competitively compensate our staff. After gaining valuable experience teaching in our nonpublic settings, teachers often leave for better paying positions in public school systems.

MSDE conducted a salary parity study. The results of study showed average teacher salaries in public schools and nonpublic special education schools differed by between \$3,600 and \$23,600, or between 7.3% and 25.8%, depending on teacher education and experience. After accounting for differences in teachers' total paid hours, teachers' wages in public schools and nonpublic special education schools differed by between 23.3% and 40.7%.

Additionally, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act (HB1300 of 2020) which has now been enacted, provides that public school teacher salaries will increase dramatically over the next few years; thereby, the pay gap between public and nonpublic special education school teachers will become even wider pulling crucial resources away from students most in need. MANSEF asks that this pay gap be addressed through additional funding to our schools.

Nonpublic special education schools are vital to the fulfillment of IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. IDEA mandates a "continuum of alternative placements to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services." Our nonpublic

special education schools are one component in that continuum and fulfill a unique and essential role in meeting students' particular educational needs and serve an important role for Maryland to comply with the federal law regarding education for special needs students.

The MANSEF schools are uniquely equipped to provide the specific, multidisciplinary, frequently intensive resources students with special needs require. The scope and depth of staff expertise afford specialized, integrated programming that goes beyond academic education and encompass the social and emotional well-being of each student. In addition to the skilled, highly trained teachers, nonpublic special education schools are staffed to provide other critical services such as behavior programs, crisis management and medical attention.

Because our teacher salaries are far behind the public schools, the gap between public and nonpublic special education school teacher salaries continues to grow. Our teachers are to be valued, recognized and appreciated. It is for these reasons that MANSEF respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 958.