



Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair  
Delegate Mark S. Chang, Vice Chair  
Appropriations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 121  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Bill: House Bill 916 Higher Education - Programs for Behavioral Health Professionals in Primary and Secondary Schools - Requirements and Grant Program**

**Position: Support**

Dear Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists throughout Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic well-being of students and families across the state.

School psychologists in Maryland have long been concerned with the increasing mental health needs of our students and how the national shortage of school-based mental health workers, including school psychologists, school counselors, and social workers, impacts our students' access to mental health services. The COVID-19 pandemic has only worsened the mental health challenges facing our students. School-based mental health providers from across the state can attest to the increasing frequency of depression, anxiety, aggression, and trauma that our students are experiencing. Students are asking for more assistance with their mental health but there are just not enough professionals, either in schools or in the community, to meet the demand.

Maryland must increase the number of school mental health professionals servicing. However, there simply are not enough people in these careers. School systems can increase these positions in their budgets, but it won't matter if there aren't qualified candidates available to apply for the positions.

House Bill 916 will make graduate programs in Maryland that produce mental health professionals accessible to a much wider pool of potential applicants.

MSPA is in strong support of House Bill 916 and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please contact us at [legislative@mSPAonline.org](mailto:legislative@mSPAonline.org).

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Phipps  
Chair, Legislative Committee  
Maryland School Psychologists' Association