

SB831_MSEA_Bost_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Cheryl Bost

Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 831
Education Support Professionals – Workgroup and Bonus**

Senate Budget & Tax Committee

March 9, 2022

1:00 PM

**Cheryl Bost
President**

The Maryland State Education Association stands in strong support of Senate Bill 831, a bill that would not only provide a bonus for the state's dedicated and essential education support professionals (ESPs), but also create a work group to develop guidance on the best ways to address issues of recruitment and retainment, by increasing ESP wages.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 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).

School support staff are essential to everyday function of the educational ecosystem. We depend on their expertise and commitment to students and families for small group virtual learning, the distribution and maintenance of devices, record-keeping and tracking of ever-changing policies, endless upkeep of school systems and safety protocols, and breakfasts and lunches, and transportation. But for far too long our school support staff have not gotten the respect and recognition that they deserve—or the compensation that makes sure that we can continue to recruit and retain outstanding individuals in these critical positions.

We are thankful for the hard work of the General Assembly in passing the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, but crisis level staffing shortages, exacerbated by the



pandemic, require both a short term and long-term solution to address the low wages of ESPs. SB 831 would utilize the current budget surplus to give support staff a \$500 bonus in FY23 and FY24 and create a workgroup to investigate support staff wages and present ways to improve them to the General Assembly to inform future legislation.

I kindly urge the committee for a favorable vote on SB 831.

Testimony SB831.pdf

Uploaded by: Gail Jankowski

Position: FAV

Testimony IN FAVOR of SB831 Education Support Professionals Workgroup & Bonus

Dear Chair Buzzone and the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I strongly SUPPORT SB 831, the Education Support Professionals Workgroup & Bonus legislation.

As you know, filling Education Support positions was difficult even before the pandemic and is even more difficult now. During the pandemic, Education Support Professionals pitched in the took on even more responsibilities. SB 831 will provide an immediate relief with a well-deserved \$500 bonus.

This Workgroup will determine what percentage of our Education Support Professionals are not receiving a Living Wage. The Workgroup will also investigate the best ways to raise the wages of these Professionals.

Better salaries for all our educators, especially our Education Support Professionals, will help maintain a dedicated, community-based workforce and ensure the success of the intent of the Blueprint for Education, which is to provide a fully staffed, safe and healthy learning environment for all our students.

Respectfully,

Gail Jankowski
Berlin, Maryland

Testimony SB831.pdf

Uploaded by: Joan Roache

Position: FAV

Testimony IN FAVOR of SB 831 Education Support Professionals Workgroup & Bonus

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Respectfully,

Joan Roache
Democratic Women's Club of Worcester County
402 14th Street
Ocean City, MD 21042
beachyogi@me.com

SB831 - Education Support Professionals - Workgrou

Uploaded by: Justin Hayes

Position: FAV



Peter Franchot
Comptroller

TESTIMONY OF COMPTROLLER PETER FRANCHOT

Support - Senate Bill 831 - Education Support Professionals - Workgroup and Bonus

Budget and Taxation Committee

March 9, 2022

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and members of the Committee, it is my pleasure to provide testimony in **support** of **Senate Bill 831 - Education Support Professionals - Workgroup and Bonus**. I would like to thank Senators Zucker and King for sponsoring this important legislation, and the Committee for providing the opportunity for my testimony to be heard.

We owe a debt to everyone who helps teachers teach and children learn – no exceptions. For too long, instructional assistants, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, front office workers and other Education Support Professionals have seen slow or no growth in their wages, despite increasing demands on their time and talents. Everyone involved in helping Maryland’s children learn struggled over the past two years, as the COVID-19 pandemic raged on, and those workers met those challenges without any anticipation of reward. Senate Bill 831 not only creates a workgroup to study how wages should be calculated for these important positions, but also provides a one-time bonus of either \$500 in FY2023 or \$1,000 in FY2024. We should recognize the commitments and sacrifices of these workers and reward their dedication to our children.

Senate Bill 831 ensures Education Support Professionals receive an upfront bonus for their hard work in challenging times and assures their contributions to Maryland’s economy – and our children’s well-being – will be compensated appropriately in the future. For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request a **favorable report** for Senate Bill 831. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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SB 831 - MoCo_Elrich_FAV (GA 22).pdf

Uploaded by: Marc Elrich

Position: FAV



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

March 9, 2022

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

RE: Senate Bill 831, *Education Support Professionals – Workgroup and Bonus*, Support

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 831 – *Education Support Professionals – Workgroup and Bonus*, which seeks to provide \$500 bonuses in each of the next two fiscal years to education support professionals (ESPs) in our public schools, including paraeducators, bus operators, office staff, building services workers, food service workers, media assistants, warehouse workers, security officers, and other noncertified staff. Importantly, the bill also creates a workgroup to study wages for ESPs across the State to determine the percentage of ESPs who currently earn a living wage and the extent to which wages must be raised over the long term to ensure that our schools can attract and retain skilled workers.

Filling ESP positions was hard for school systems before the pandemic but recruiting and retaining these professionals has reached a crisis level over the past two years, with staffing shortages reported in jurisdictions across the State. The dedicated support staff who provided our students with transportation, nutritious meals, classroom support, technology support, clean and safe schools, and numerous other services that kept our schools functioning during the pandemic, and who continue to provide essential services that contribute so significantly to the maintenance of safe, healthy, and positive learning environments, have not received the respect and recognition that they deserve or the commensurate compensation that ensures that our schools can continue to recruit and retain outstanding people in these important positions.

Although the Blueprint for Maryland's Future includes significant increases to teacher compensation over the coming years, it does not address compensation for ESPs in any way. Providing much deserved bonuses to our ESPs would be a wise use of the State's current budget surplus. It is a very small step that can be taken over the next two years pending completion of the workgroup's comprehensive evaluation of ESP wages and issuance of recommendations for addressing pay parity in a more meaningful way over the long run. Our schools simply cannot function well without talented and dedicated ESPs and it is critical that we take steps as soon as possible to make sure that they are valued and supported appropriately.

I respectfully request that the Budget and Taxation Committee vote favorable on Senate Bill 831 and ensure that sufficient funding is included in the fiscal 2023 State budget to provide a \$500 bonus to ESPs throughout the State.

SEIU Local 500 - SB 831 Support Staff Bonus and Wa

Uploaded by: Pia Morrison

Position: FAV



**Hearing Testimony March 9, 2022
Senate Budget and Tax Committee
Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CtW, CLC**

Senate Bill 831: Education Support Professionals – Workgroup and Bonus

SUPPORT

Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Senate Budget and Tax Committee,

Thank you, everyone. It's great to be with you today. My name is Pia Morrison, President of SEIU Local 500. SEIU Local 500 represents approximately 20,000 working people in Montgomery County and across our region. Our membership includes the thousands of support staff at MCPS, part-time faculty at Montgomery College, childcare providers, and more. We are the largest and fastest growing public sector union in the county and state.

I am proud to stand here alongside Senator Zucker, MSEA, and other organizations in support of Senate Bill 831 – SEIU Local 500 represents over 9,000 support staff at MCPS which is the largest school district in Maryland. We represent paras, bus operators, office staff, building service workers, food service workers, and many more. On behalf of the thousands of support staff members we want to thank Senator Zucker for being a champion of K12 education and our members.

Senate bill 831 not only includes a modest bonus to acknowledge the sacrifice the thousands of support staff made throughout Maryland during the COVID-19 pandemic but also forms a workgroup to study wages for support staff across our state and make recommendations on how to attract and retain staff.

Support staff are essential to the school day. But for far too long they have not gotten the respect nor the recognition that they deserve. School support staff are the backbone of the safe, healthy, and supportive learning and working environment that must exist if educators and students are to succeed. Many are second or third generation school employees who contribute to the communities they live in. For their extraordinary and essential commitment, support staff deserve a fair wage and recognition for the value they bring to education.

During the pandemic our food and nutrition staff continued preparing and distributing thousands of meals for students each day; security staff that helped at schools with the distribution of the meals, and bus drivers delivered meals to those schools and helped to distribute them to families.

Our instructional technology staff, including media assistants, worked to support the delivery, repair, and operations of thousands of Chromebooks and internet hot-spots for all students and teachers.

Building service workers performed additional sanitizing procedures in buildings. It was the maintenance workers that worked diligently to test air quality, change filters, and set-up air purifiers where needed.

**Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CtW, CLC
901 Russell Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD 20879
301-740-7100 www.seiu500.org
Pia Morrison, President**



Warehouse workers received, sorted, and distributed masks, sanitizing wipes, hand sanitizers, and later distributing KN95 masks and home testing kits.

Secretaries immediately pivoted to perform their duties digitally while remaining responsive to their administrators, staff, and parents.

And it was paraeducators that dove into learning all the new instructional technologies so they could continue to support their teachers and students with online learning.

It was the effort that all these individuals did while continuing to support student and family wellbeing, while also tending to their own family and personal wellbeing.

It has been, and continues to be, an exhausting time for educational staff.

Words of appreciation and public applause only goes so far. But recognizing these servants with a modest bonus is the least the state can do to honor their dedication to our students and families.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, low pay is a long-standing issue for support staff, the median weekly wage for food services workers was \$331, was \$493 for school bus drivers and \$507 for paraeducators. Also, nearly every state has experienced significant losses in local public education employment because of the pandemic. Education support staff are vital to school operations. However, the average age of a support staff professional is 48 years old, since covid poses a greater risk to older adults, this further compounds the problem for support staff. As we look forward to the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, my hope is that lawmakers use that opportunity to raise the wages of education support staff professionals so that they can live in the counties where they provide such critical services to the community.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 supports SB 831 and we ask that you vote yes and urge a favorable committee report.

Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CtW, CLC
901 Russell Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD 20879
301-740-7100 www.seiu500.org
Pia Morrison, President

TBS Sally Murek testimony for SB831 ESP bonus and

Uploaded by: Sally Murek

Position: FAV

Speaker: Sally Murek, Montgomery County Public Schools, paraeducator
Occasion: Virtual Testimony for Support Staff Bonus and Wage Study Bill – SB831
Location: Senate Budget and Tax Committee hearing, Annapolis
Date: Wednesday, March 9, 2022
Who: A private citizen

Good afternoon, committee members, and thank you for this opportunity to be with you today to share my strong support for Senate Bill 831. My name is Sally Murek and I am a paraeducator with Montgomery County Public Schools where I have worked to support staff and the instruction of students for 31 years. I want to say a special thank you to Senator Zucker for his leadership on this important issue.

Much has been shared with you in previous testimonies of how the heroes of the school system stepped up during the pandemic to ensure instruction continued for our students, our children. I wish to expand on the courage, flexibility, and stamina of the paraeducators. They were called upon to pivot instantly into a digital instructional world. Alongside of teachers, they took multiple and daily just-in-time trainings to learn all the virtual platforms and tools that would be available and needed to deliver virtual instruction which was effective and engaging. On top of the hours of technological trainings, they had to establish their “home classrooms” and set up technology for virtual delivery while spending hours collaborating with their peers and teachers. And they had to form their own small groups of students with teacher guidance while figuring out how to continue to support the students they were already supporting. Many also had to supervise their own children through their digital learning classes and being at home rather than in school or child care. Paraeducators had to handle the trauma and anxiety of the pandemic for themselves, their families, and their loved ones while carrying on with their prescribed task of engaging our students in effective differentiated instruction.

Educational support professionals, specifically paraeducators, were left out of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future for them to be recognized and respected as the integral partners in student instruction and learning that they are. They were removed in the eleventh hour before passage of the bill, and I hope the workgroup being formed by this legislation will rectify that mistake. They serve as co-educators and are due the same respect and recognition.

Montgomery County Public Schools has approximately 2700 paraeducators. 60% have a four-year degree, another 20% have master’s degrees and we have a number that hold Ph.Ds. Our paras have CHOSEN this as their career, not because it is “all they can do.” They love supporting the academics and growth of our students. They are flexible and willing to use their instructional knowledge and skills to quickly support school operations and instructional needs in real time as situations arise. During COVID, many, many paras have stepped in to be teachers covering classes for a day, a week, and even as long-term subs because of high staff absenteeism and unfilled teacher positions.

Paras build relationships to envelop and promote the whole-child. It is not uncommon for students to have deeper relationships with paras, or other educational support professionals, rather than with their

teacher. Paras are quick to pick up on subtle changes in a child's behavior in unstructured settings such as specials, and lunch and recess. They may see a gregarious child become quiet and withdrawn at recess, or a child who usually brings lunch to school to suddenly not bringing lunch and not wanting the "free" lunch that is offered. These social-emotional observations are then shared with teachers and counselors as possible "red flags." They also provide continuity to families by being there for siblings and cousins as they progress through a school.

Paraeducators love working in schools and supporting the academic and well-being development of our students, but they have financial needs and families, too. Low wages are affecting our recruitment and retention of these valuable and educated employees. Many must work second jobs and struggle to provide for their families, buy homes, and provide for their futures. We have heard terrible stories of paras being homeless and living out of their cars even though they are fully employed by our schools. Many cannot afford to live in the county where they work. More than half of all support staff working full time in 2020-2021 earned less than \$35,000. 70% were paid less than \$45,000. They are "essential" but are not paid as if they are. Paras, and educational support professionals, are the backbone of our schools. They deserve a fair wage and recognition for the value they bring to education.

In closing, I ask for your support to pass Senate Bill 831. Our schools are worth it – our educational support staff our worth it – our children are worth it.

AFTMcKayParaBill.pdf

Uploaded by: Shawn McKay

Position: FAV



A Union of Professionals
AFT-Maryland

5800 Metro Drive, Suite 100 • Baltimore, MD 21215-3226
410/764-3030 • fax: 410/764-3008
md.aft.org

Kenya Campbell
PRESIDENT

LaBrina Hopkins
SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Written Testimony from American Federation of Teachers-Maryland
SB 831 – State Operating Budget – Step Increases for State Employees – Reporting
Before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
March 9, 2022
SUPPORT**

My name is Shawn J McKay, and I am an employee of the Baltimore City Public School System, working for the past 21 years as a special education paraeducator. I also am The Vice Chair of the PSRP chapter of the BTU, and a member at large of the AFT-Maryland. On behalf of the BTU and AFT-Maryland, I am asking for a favorable report to SB831, the bill that would form a workgroup to study the wages and compensation packages to the Education Support Personnel who are so vital to the education of Maryland's students.

Members of the committee, it is important that you recognize and appreciate the work I, along with my fellow paraeducators and support personnel, do in order to be sure the students at Baltimore City schools have the best educational outcomes. In my 21 years as a paraeducator I have worked at 6 different schools in the city. This is what a typical day looks like for me: I come in clean down the desk to prepare for in class breakfast and collaborate with the teacher for a few minutes to plan the day. The it is time to receive our students from the busses and assist the students with taking off coats and teaching them to hang their things up. Next, breakfast is served, and I begin teaching how to hold a spoon and open their items. After that, we clean up and do toileting, all before instruction can begin. Next, we start our morning instruction, and after about an hour in half we go back to toileting our students which can take up to 30 to 45 mins. Then we move into small groups teaching language arts and writing, which includes how to hold a pencil. On some days we have to do the total instruction due to the fact the teacher is in a meeting that could take up to 2 to three hours. This is just a small portion of what a paraeducator does daily.

If enacted, this bill would be a step in the right direction towards the just compensation towards paraeducators and support personnel and recognizing the value of the work of the numerous different support personnel are engaged in on a daily basis. First, it would create a commission that would research the type of work and compensation levels for educational support staff in different counties across the state, and report back their findings to the legislature. In addition, the bill calls for the state to provide bonuses to education support personnel of up to \$1000. These bonuses can be used to help attract and retain vital staff that have been leaving the education ranks over the past few years due to the pandemic emergency.

Members of the committee, for too long the work I and my fellow education support professionals have done for years for Maryland's children has gone unrecognized and unappreciated. Yet without the work of the education support staff in our state's public classrooms, our public schools would not be able to provide Maryland's students with the education they need. Again, AFT-Maryland and BTU call for a favorable report for SB831. Thank you for your time, have a safe and pleasant afternoon.

SB831_MSEA_CAESS_Tayman_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Stacy Tayman

Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 831
Education Support Professionals – Workgroup and Bonus**

**Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
March 9, 2022
1:00 PM**

**Stacy Tayman
President, Calvert Association of Educational Support Staff**

Greetings Chair Guzzone and Honorable Members of the Budget & Tax Committee. My name is Stacy Tayman and I am an education support professional (ESP) in the Calvert County Public Schools system. Today, I am providing testimony in support of SB 831, a bill that will provide not only a bonus to ESPs but work to find a long-term solution to low wages and issues of retention.

I have served in administrative support and clerical positions with the Calvert County Public School Systems for 25 years. I am currently eligible for retirement in December of 2024, but when that date arrives, I will not be able to retire on my 25-year contribution to MSRAI.

Staffing shortages systemwide are causing other staff to discard their responsibilities to cover other vacancies. Instructional Assistants are being pulled from their duties to cover for teachers but are not paid anywhere near a teacher salary. Newly hired instructional assistants with a bachelor's degree earn less than \$25,500. A conditional teacher, with the same education, earns \$39,000. A new teacher, with the same education plus a teacher certificate, earns \$50,500. However, the instructional assistants are used as viable substitutions for absent teachers. In varying amounts, Calvert and other counties have support coverage that pays an additional \$14 per hour when coverage is for 90 minutes or more in any given day. That's an acknowledgement that ESPs, as employees, are more valuable when attached to a teacher designation.



Building service workers returned to buildings well before the rest of the staff when little was known about the coronavirus, in order to ensure the safe return of our students. A beginning building service worker earns approximately \$32,500, but are charged with disinfecting, understanding cleaning protocols as related to blood, bodily fluids, etc.

System wide, turnover is prevalent, which contributes to a severe lack in the continuity of services. Several thousands of dollars are lost each year as a result of employee turnover – posting, interviewing, onboard, training, and retraining. If pay was higher, positions would be more highly sought and longer retention could be realized.

Education support professionals are the foundation of every school day. We are an intricate web of professionals who hold our school systems together. We provide services that keep students safe. It is time to invest in the infrastructure that keeps schools functioning. The cracks in this foundation have been patched for too long. For all these reasons, I think it is imperative that we find a solution to retain and attract ESPs.

I kindly ask the committee for a favorable vote on SB 831.

SB831_MSEA_ESPBC_Fisher_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Steven Bradley Fisher

Position: FAV

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 831
Education Support Professionals – Workgroup and Bonus**

**Senate Budget & Tax Committee
March 9, 2022
1:00 PM**

**Brad Fisher
Education Support Professionals of Baltimore County**

Greetings Chair Guzzone and Honorable Members of the Budget & Tax Committee. My name is Brad Fisher. I am an education support professional (ESP) in the Baltimore County Public Schools system, and I am the MSEA ESP of the Year. Today, I am providing testimony in support of SB 831, a bill that will provide not only a bonus to ESPs but work to find a long-term solution to low wages and issues of retention.

I am a career changer who moved from finance to education because I wanted to do more impactful work in my community. My work in education started as a paraeducator and I now work as an administrative assistant specializing in finance.

Since making my career transition to education, I have been able to see the first-hand positive impacts ESPs make on students. School support staff are the backbone of the safe, healthy, and supportive learning and working environment that must exist if educators and students are to succeed. Many ESPs are second or third generation school employees who contribute to the communities they live in. It is imperative that students are exposed to positive role models who look like them and share similar backgrounds. For their extraordinary and essential commitment, support staff deserve a fair wage and recognition for the value they bring to education.

I kindly urge the committee for a favorable vote on SB 831.

MEC Testimony-SB831.pdf

Uploaded by: Sue Fothergill

Position: FAV



Maryland Education Coalition



Shanetta Martin & Sue Fothergill – Co-chairs

Web site - www.marylandeducationcoalition.org Email – md.ed.coaliton@gmail.com

Date: March 9, 2022
BILL: [SB0831](#) / [HB1394](#)
POSITION: Support

TITLE: Education Support Professionals - Workgroup and Bonus
COMMITTEE: Budget and Tax

SB831 would establish a workgroup to study the wages of education support professionals and it would require the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation to provide pay bonuses to education support professionals for fiscal years 2023 and 2024.

This bill seeks to address the serious and significant shortage of education support professionals along with ensuring that Maryland corrects the long-standing issue of not adequately compensating these essential public school system employees. Education Support Professionals provide a range of professional services in public schools, including the provision of one-to-one support for students with disabilities, assisting teachers with classroom activities, monitoring hallways and lunchrooms, and welcoming students at the beginning of the day and seeing them off at the end of the day. They also serve as the school’s “pinch-hitter” filling in where the help is needed.

The future of Maryland’s public school students depends on schools having the staffing capacity to meet the mandates of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future including freeing teachers up to be able to plan effectively for their students and collaborate with other educators. Extra eyes, hands, and ears help to create a professional experience for teachers.

Unfortunately, these essential employees are paid wages that do not meet the test of a living wage and often time are not full-time employees and therefore not eligible for benefits. Prior to the pandemic there was a shortage of Education Support Specialists, since the pandemic the shortage is at a crises level. As Kesa Summers, a reading specialist who teaches English at Eastern Middle School in Silver Spring, Md, described in the Education Week article, [Staffing Shortages Are Hurting Students Who Need Extra Reading Support](#), “One person in a class of 25, they can only do so much,... even with the planning time, you can’t ask a person to be three different people.”

If we are to build a World Class education system in Maryland it has to begin with adequately and appropriately compensating Education Support Professionals to ensure that every Maryland school has sufficient staffing capacity.

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) is the oldest, largest, most experienced, and diverse group of public education stakeholders in Maryland. We are an independent, non-partisan voice for Maryland’s K-12 students. MEC’s goal is to ensure adequate, equitable funding and systemic accountability for the estimated 900,000 public school students in Maryland regardless of academic, cultural, economic, geographic, racial, or other demographic status. MEC is committed to advocating for state education policies that deliver on the constitutional right and civil right for all students to access a high-quality, competitive education.

For these and other reasons, we urge a favorable report for SB831.

American Civil Liberties Union of MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Arts Every Day, Attendance Works, CASA, Children’s Behavioral Health Coalition, Decoding Dyslexia of MD, Disability Rights Maryland, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, Right to Read Maryland, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Ed, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition, Maryland Out of School Time Network, Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education, MSC-NAACP, Maryland School Psychologists’ Association, Parent Advocacy Consortium, Public Justice Center, School Social Workers of MD, Strong Schools Maryland, Kalman Hettleman, David Hornbeck, Shanetta Martin, Sharon Rubinstein, Rick Tyler, Jr.

SB831_Education Support Professionals Workgroup_Fa

Uploaded by: Susanna Eisenman

Position: FAV

SB831_Education Support Professionals Workgroup_Favorable

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to express my support for SB831 and the formation of the Education Support Professionals Workgroup. For too long, the people who work in our schools have overperformed while being underpaid. I have heard this firsthand from people who have worked as Educational Assistants, Administrative Assistants, Bus Drivers and the like. These people love working with students but sometimes have to get additional part time jobs to make ends meet. We live in a rural county, so employment opportunities are scarce and jobs in education are seen as secure.

Given that wages are rising in other sectors such as retail after the pandemic, it would be reasonable to at least examine how wages for educational jobs compare today. We need to attract and retain qualified people here on the Eastern Shore.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susanna Eisenman

TJH Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Terrone Hill

Position: FAV

My name is Terrone Jerel Hill, and I am an employee of the Baltimore City Public School System, working for the past ten years as ESOL Paraeducator and now Team Support Professional. I also am a member of the Baltimore Teachers Union and serve on the PSRP Committee. On behalf of the BTU and our statewide union, AFT-Maryland, I ask for a favorable report to HB 1349, the bill that would form a workgroup to study the wages and compensation packages to the Education Support Personnel who are so vital to the education of Maryland's students.

I have worked for Baltimore City Public Schools for over ten years. I first came to the district as a long term sub because I was unemployed and needed a job. After my first long term assignment at Garrett Heights Elementary Middle School, I received mentorship from school administration and seasoned instructors. I learned curriculum, lesson plan preparation and instructional coaching. What I thought would be a temporary situation to earn money, has become a career filled with joy, commitment and compassion. After receiving a full time gainful employment opportunity with the district, I have enjoyed working with and serving numerous families in the city of Baltimore. Each day I wake up, I'm excited to go to work to interact with scholars. It is a great feeling to know that each day the work I do makes a positive impact in the lives of so many students and families. I hope to give the committee a sense of the vital work I and my fellow Paraeducators perform so that we may be recognized for the integral role we play in the education of Maryland's children. In my ten years as a Paraeducator at 4 different schools in the city I have committed myself as a public servant to help meet the academic, social and holistic needs of scholars in our district. My role as Paraeducator goes far beyond the instructional support required of my position. A mentor, motivator, second parent and caretaker, therapist, crisis support, and provider of basic necessities for scholars such as food, clothing, and toiletries are some of the ways in which I have committed myself to go beyond the call of duty to serve students in our district.

This bill would be a step in the right direction towards the just compensation towards paraeducators and support personnel and recognizing the value of the work numerous different support personnel are engaged in on a daily basis. First, it would create a commission that would research the type of work and compensation levels for educational support staff in different counties across the state, and report back their findings to the legislature. In addition, the bill calls for the state to provide bonuses to education support personnel of up to \$1000.

Members of the committee, for too long the work I and my fellow education support professionals have done for Maryland's children has gone unrecognized and unappreciated. Yet without the work of the education support staff in our state's public classrooms, our public schools would not be able to provide Maryland's students with the education they need. Again, the Baltimore Teachers Union and AFT-Maryland call for a favorable report for HB 1349. Thank you.

SB831 Testimony Perez Sneed .pdf

Uploaded by: Tom Perez

Position: FAV



SB 831 - Education Support Professionals - Working Group and Bonus

SUPPORT

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

School support professionals are the backbone of Maryland's school system and essential for creating an education environment where all our children can thrive. They transport our children, provide them with meals, assist families with virtual learning, keep our schools clean, and so much more. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was a challenge to attract and retain support staff in our schools. Right now, nearly half of Maryland's educational support staff make less than \$35,000 a year, and statewide staffing shortages have created an additional crisis for Maryland's schools. Maryland can do better for our support professionals. We can begin with providing school support staff immediate bonuses to recognize their role and sacrifice during the COVID-19 pandemic. But short-term relief is not enough. Maryland needs to develop a plan to raise wages permanently, so their wages reflect the value of the work they provide to our schools.

Throughout my career, I have fought for workers by supporting collective bargaining, fair wages, and strengthening workers' voices on the job. I have seen how an empowered workforce improves working conditions, ensures that public services are of the highest quality, and increases retention rates.

For too long, educational support staff have remained in the shadows of fair wage conversations. Without support professionals, Maryland's schools would not be able to provide our children with the education they deserve. It's long overdue that Maryland treats our school support professionals with dignity by paying them the wages they deserve for the services they provide to our students and community. By paying support professionals a living wage, we can alleviate staff shortages, provide teachers and families with the support they need, and strengthen Maryland's schools for our kids.

I want to thank Senators Zucker and King for sponsoring this important legislation and for being advocates for support professionals, schools, and students across our state.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB 831. Thank you.

Tom Perez and Shannon Sneed

SB831 Wes Moore (ESP workgroup and bonus) Written

Uploaded by: William Castleberry

Position: FAV

Testimony of Wes Miller
Former Education CEO and Candidate for Governor
Before the Budget and Taxation
Education Support Professionals - Workgroup and Bonus
FAVORABLE (Senate Bill 831)

Chair Senator Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **Senate Bill 831, Education Support Professionals - Workgroup and Bonus.**

First, allow me to thank Senator Zucker for sponsoring this bill, which seeks to better understand, support, and reward the remarkable work that educational support professionals perform every day in creating the safe, clean, and productive educational environment that our children deserve.

I submit this testimony, as a father and as the founder and CEO of a Baltimore-based education start-up, which focused on providing students from low-income backgrounds with the tools they needed to succeed in college. In that work, I saw first-hand how the daily challenges our teachers face, from over-crowded classrooms to poor working conditions, directly impact their ability to prepare our children for the future.

Maryland's education support professionals provide our teachers with the support they need to concentrate on their core job - educating our children. The services that our education support professionals provide, inside and outside of the classroom are vital; however, about half of Maryland's education support professionals make less than \$35,000 a year. For many Marylanders, that does not constitute a living wage.

Senate Bill 831 takes the necessary step of creating a workgroup to study whether or not these public servants are being fairly compensated. We must do this to protect our teachers, ensure we are treating our employees equitably, and attract the kinds of educators we need to provide our children with the educational opportunities that are their right.

In addition, the measure would provide a much-needed and unquestionably earned \$500 bonus for our educational support professionals. These are the people who have been on the front line in getting us past the pandemic - cleaning classrooms and driving our kids to school. This bonus is an overdue recognition of the work they do and the value they bring to our state.

As I have mentioned before, there are a host of actions the state must take to preserve and protect Maryland's world-class education system, including fully funding and implementing the Blueprint for Maryland's future. I ask the Committee to take another step toward that end today by reporting favorably on Senate Bill 831.

SB 831 - SWA - Education Support Professionals – W

Uploaded by: Ary Amerikaner

Position: FWA

SB 831.Education Support Professionals Bunuses and

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FWA

BILL: Senate Bill 831
TITLE: Education Support Professionals - Workgroup and Bonus
DATE: March 9, 2022
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS
COMMITTEE: Budget & Taxation
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports Senate Bill 831 to benefit and reward the educational support personnel in every school system across the state.

Senate Bill 831 would invest available state funding in bonuses for support staff who have contributed significantly to the teaching and learning of students throughout the pandemic and the return to in-person learning.

Education support professionals include a broad range of noncertificated staff members, including: teachers' aides and paraeducators, administrative assistants, custodians, bus drivers, facilities maintenance staff, security and technology staff, food service workers, and many other critically important school employees. This legislation would appropriately direct the state to provide \$500 bonuses to each of these staff members, in each of the next two years. If bonuses are not funded this year, the bill would require that \$1,000 bonuses be included in next year's budget. In addition, the bill calls for a compensation study.

MABE requests one technical amendment to clarify and ensure that the bill's reference to noncertificated education support professionals is clear, by inserting "under Title 6, Subtitle 5, of this article" after "professional" in line 27 of page 3 of the bill.

The Blueprint ensures new statewide systems of compensation, working conditions, and professional development for educational staff, and increases per pupil funding to support these initiatives. MABE supports initiatives by the General Assembly to provide more state funding and bonuses for educational support professionals in line with the initiatives contained with the Blueprint. These professionals are essential to achieving the goals outlined by the Blueprint.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 831, with the amendment described above.

SB831_Zucker_Fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Craig Zucker

Position: FWA

CRAIG J. ZUCKER
Legislative District 14
Montgomery County



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 122
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3625 · 301-858-3625
800-492-7122 Ext. 3625
Fax 410-841-3618 · 301-858-3618
Craig.Zucker@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee
Chair, Capital Budget Subcommittee

Chair, Senate Democratic Caucus

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker
Senate Bill – 831 – Education Support Professionals – Workgroup and Bonus
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
March 9th, 2022
2:00pm
Position: SUPPORT

Good afternoon Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chairman Rosapepe, and distinguished members of the committee. It is my pleasure to testify today in **support of Senate Bill – 831 – Education Support Professionals – Workgroup and Bonus.**

Senate Bill 836 requires the Governor to include an appropriation in the Fiscal Year 2024 that is either \$500 or \$1,000 to noncertificated education support professionals (ESP). If the FY 2023 budget includes a \$500 bonus to each noncertificated education support professional, then the Governor must include a \$500 bonus the next fiscal year. As currently introduced, the Governor's FY 2023 budget does not include funding for a \$500 bonus.

School support staff are essential to the school day and are the backbone of a safe, healthy, and supportive learning and working environment that must exist in order for educators and students to succeed. As we see staggering staffing shortages across the state, it's more important than ever that more steps are taken to ensure support staff are valued, supported, and stay in our schools. For their extraordinary and essential commitment, support staff should have a fair wage and recognition for the value they bring to education.

Noncertificated ESP is not defined in the bill or current law, but it includes teacher aides, library aides, or any other aides as reported by the Maryland State Department of Education. It does not include noncertificated school personnel that do not have an educational function.

Senate Bill 836 also establishes a workgroup to study the wages of education support professionals to determine what percentage of education support professionals in the State earn a living wage and to study increasing wages to attract and retain these workers.

General fund expenditures would increase by \$14.4 million in FY 2024 to provide each noncertificated education support professionals with a \$1,000 bonus.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 831. Thank you for your kind consideration.

SB 831 Education Support Professionals - Workgroup

Uploaded by: Barbara Wilkins

Position: INFO



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

LARRY HOGAN
Governor

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lieutenant Governor

DAVID R. BRINKLEY
Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

SENATE BILL 831 Education Support Professionals - Workgroup and Bonus (Zucker)

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: March 9, 2022

COMMITTEE: Senate Budget & Taxation and Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

SUMMARY OF BILL: SB 831 establishes the Workgroup to Study the Wages of Education Support Professionals to determine the percentage of education support professional in the State earn a living wage and study wage increases for education support professional to attract and retain skilled workers; mandates a \$500 bonus for each education support professional in FY 2023 and FY 2024; and mandates a \$1,000 bonus for each non-certified education support professional in FY 2024, if the FY 2023 Budget does not contain a \$500 bonus for these employees.

EXPLANATION: The Department of Budget and Management's focus is not on the underlying policy proposal being advanced by the legislation, but rather on the estimated expenditure of \$39 million between FY 2023 and FY 2024. No funding is in the FY 2023 Budget allowance for this purpose.

DBM has the responsibility of submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually, which will require spending allocations for FY 2024 to be within the official revenues estimates approved by the Board of Revenue Estimates in December 2022.

Changes to the Maryland Constitution in 2020 provide the General Assembly with additional budgetary authority, beginning in the 2023 Session, to realign total spending by increasing and adding items to appropriations in the budget submitted by the Governor. The legislature's new budgetary power diminishes, if not negates, the need for mandated appropriation bills.

Fully funding the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Kirwan) will require fiscal discipline in the years ahead, if the State is to maintain the current projected structural budget surpluses. Mandated spending increases need to be reevaluated within the context of this education funding priority and the Governor's tax relief proposals.

Economic conditions remain precarious as a result of COVID-19. High rates of inflation and workforce shortages may be short lived or persist, thereby impacting the Maryland economy. While current budget forecasts project structural surpluses, the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a significant budgetary vulnerability. The Department continues to urge the General Assembly to focus on maintaining the structural budget surplus.

45 Calvert Street · Annapolis, MD 21401-1907

Tel: 410-260-7041 · Fax: 410-974-2585 · Toll Free: 1-800-705-3493 · TTY Users: Call via Maryland Relay

<http://dbm.maryland.gov>

**For additional information, contact Barbara Wilkins at (410) 260-6371
or barbara.wilkins1@maryland.gov**