

**Informational Testimony regarding House Bill 752  
Public Schools - School Psychologist Recruitment Program**

**Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs  
Tuesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
1:00 p.m.**

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The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony on House Bill 752, which would establish the School Psychologist Recruitment Program within the State Department of Education to provide professional development programs and aid for a certification fee to school psychologists and individuals seeking to become school psychologists and to reimburse school psychologists for professional conference expenses. It would also require the Program to select a maximum of 100 individuals for the Program, giving priority to individuals from groups underrepresented among professional personnel in the State.

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).

Given the ongoing personnel, resource, and support challenges facing our schools and districts, investing in the training and recruitment of student health professionals such as school psychologists is an essential step toward meeting students' needs. Our state does not currently have a sufficient mental and behavioral health professional pipeline to meet professionally recommended student-to-staff ratios, let alone the number of staff required to meet the needs of students. As such, efforts to ensure that we can recruit, train, and deploy additional behavioral and mental health professionals in our schools, especially those from underrepresented communities, are important.



In highlighting the importance of recruiting and preparing school psychologists, we must also emphasize the need to invest in retaining their talents through adequate compensation and advancement opportunities. Though school psychologists and other school health professionals play a critical role in students' wellbeing at school, they are not yet included in the career ladder and pay incentives outlined in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. To ensure a sustainable workforce that can meet students' needs, it is critical that we both recruit incoming school psychologists and retain current employees.

MSEA believes that concerted efforts must be made to recruit and train school psychologists, especially those from underrepresented groups. We will further continue to advocate for school psychologists and other student health professionals to be compensated as the essential staff they are.