



Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: House Bill 752 - Public Schools – School Psychologist Recruitment Program

Position: Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, 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.

Maryland schools are experiencing crisis level shortages of school behavioral health providers. In 2019, the General Assembly passed legislation (HB 844) to assess the current school psychologist coverage. The reporting resulting from HB 844 **showed that no county in the state has enough school psychologist to meet the nationally recommended standard of one school psychologist for every 500 to 700 students**, 19 counties had one school psychologist for more than thousand students, and two counties had ratios of one school psychologist for more than every two thousand students.ⁱ **This psychologist to student ratios were also recognized in the 2019 report of the Commission on Innovation & Excellence in Education as necessary to address student behavioral health needs.**ⁱⁱ

Although we would greatly appreciate funding to maintain national certification, we believe that there needs to be a significant increase in investment in funding for school behavioral health staffing in order to fully address the state's behavioral health staffing needs. Although the Blueprint did include significant funding for school behavioral health, we are not currently seeing increased investment in recruitment or retention of school behavioral health staff.

MSPA supports HB 752 but strongly believes that the state needs to also consider broader investment in school behavioral health staffing. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please contact us at legislative@mSPAonline.org or Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Phipps
Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association

ⁱ [Summary from MSPA of school psychology ratio data in provided in response to HB0844 \(2019\)](#)

ⁱⁱ <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5300/sc5339/000113/023600/023691/20190075e.pdf>