



HB752 PUBLIC SCHOOLS - SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports with amendments **HB752 Public Schools - School Psychologist Recruitment Program**. This bill establishes the School Psychologist Recruitment Program within MSDE. It also requires the Program to provide professional development programs and aid for a certain certification fee to school psychologists and individuals seeking to become school psychologists and to reimburse school psychologists for professional conference expenses.

AACPS recognizes the importance of promoting the positive mental health of all students through the development of impactful relationships and by teaching resilience. Student mental health is of particular importance during this time when AACPS students are faced with a global health pandemic and other challenges. School counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, pupil personnel workers, and school nurses collaborate with staff, parents/guardians, and the community to overcome barriers to learning. The emphasis on multi-tiered systems of support, which also include Section 504 accommodations and restorative practices, further supports this effort and AACPS Strategic Plan emphasizing relationships, rigor, and readiness for all students. By removing barriers, providing resources, and teaching appropriate social-emotional skills, students gain the tools to be productive citizens.

School psychology is currently a critical shortage area and local school systems would certainly benefit from a Statewide recruitment effort.

AACPS respectfully requests that the bill be amended to emphasize recruitment and support of diverse candidates. Diverse school psychologists would be a benefit to our diverse student population as they navigate a variety of issues, including discrimination, bias, and cultural barriers; lack of access to resources and mental health providers; mental health stigma; poverty; social media; and trauma.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on HB752.