

Testimony in Support with Amendments to House Bill 1267 Promise Schools - Establishment

**House Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association supports, with amendments, House Bill 1267. This legislation would require the State Department of Education to designate 10 community schools that are identified as low-performing or in need of comprehensive support and improvement as promise schools each year, require a county board of education to perform a comprehensive analysis of key factors and causes that led to a school being low-performing or in need of comprehensive support and improvement, and require the Governor to include \$2,000,000 in the annual budget bill to support technical assistance and support for promise schools.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. 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).

We wholeheartedly support the goal of providing targeted resources to community schools in need of additional support. Universal school meals and wraparound services, for example, undoubtedly benefit students' learning and overall wellbeing. The Promise School Plans in this legislation would be locally developed, comprehensive, and adapted to the needs of the individual school and its students.

We thank the sponsor for meeting with us regarding amendments to ensure that salary increases and professional requirements in the Promise School Plan are distributed fairly and are subject to collective bargaining. We also look forward to continuing to discuss alternatives to the existing proposal that when a Promise



School has made insufficient progress after 3 years, students may transfer to another school in the county or state at the county board's expense. Such an arrangement could rapidly destabilize enrollment, wreaking havoc on funding, wraparound supports, and school culture by creating de facto school closures – an approach which research shows is “not a promising strategy for remedying low student performance” and carries risks to students' well-being.¹ We urge an amendment that removes this extreme measure and adopts a more constructive strategy to promoting student success.

MSEA continues to enthusiastically support investment in community schools. **We therefore urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 1267 with the critical amendments described here.**

¹ School Closure as a Strategy to Remedy Low Performance. National Education Policy Center (2017). <https://nepc.colorado.edu/sites/default/files/publications/PB%20Sunderman-Coghlan-Mintrop%20Closures.pdf>