

SB791_MSEA_Bost_.pdf

Uploaded by: Cheryl Bost

Position: FAV

**Testimony SUPPORT of Senate Bill 791
Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Job Duties
and Salaries**

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
March 1, 2023**

**Cheryl Bost
President**

The Maryland State Education Association strongly supports Senate Bill 791, which seeks to take targeted steps aimed at improving the educator shortages that are impacting school systems and job types across the state. This bill is one of MSEA's top 2023 legislative priorities to help address the educator shortage and excessive workloads.

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).

This session has created exciting and important opportunities for educators to partner with legislative leaders to build on the legislature's strong record of commitment to our public schools with policies to meet this moment and ensure that no Marylanders are left behind. Educators are focused on helping students excel after the pandemic yet are doing so in the face of excessive workload issues which are exacerbated by staffing shortages in every school building. The pipeline of educators continues to be insufficient while challenging working conditions and years of inadequate pay make it hard to retain the outstanding professionals whom students and families depend on. At the same time, many of our students require more support and services than ever.

The staffing shortage affects the academic achievement, emotional wellness, and safety of our students. Students and families are faced with more trauma, unaddressed social emotional needs, societal divisiveness, and high levels of stress. These have contributed to more disciplinary issues that too often lead to violence between students and sometimes against staff members. To provide additional student support, targeted interventions, trainings, and restorative practices, our schools need more qualified mental health professionals and support staff. Schools must be the safe and supportive learning and teaching environments they are meant to be, and that students, educators, and families deserve. Senate Bill 791 takes limited but strategic



reforms to better recruit and retain the outstanding educators that all students and schools deserve and depend on.

The bill would expand eligibility for all salary increases that are currently limited to Nationally Board Certified (NBC) teachers to additional highly qualified educators.

There are many teachers, who are not directly the teacher of record, who have National Board Certifications but are currently not eligible for the state portion of the salary increases (\$10,000 for NBC and \$7,000 more for teaching in an identified low-performing school). This bill would expand eligibility for these increases to those teaching in critical shortage areas like reading and math specialists, school counselors, literacy interventionists, gifted and talented specialists, and more who are just as important to the daily instruction and success for students as the classroom teacher/teacher of record. Leveling the playing field is important to making sure that highly qualified educators in these roles stay in them rather than move to NBC-eligible roles and exacerbate shortages in non-NBC-eligible roles. They've earned the national certifications, they work directly with students daily, and they should not be left out of the salary enhancement.

The bill would expand eligibility for these salary increases to behavioral health and other school-based student service providers who obtain highly regarded national accreditation in their profession.

School psychologists, speech pathologists, and others who work directly with students are not eligible for National Board Certification but have the ability to gain national certification from other accreditation bodies. Under the bill, the Maryland State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board would vet and determine what the appropriate and applicable accreditations are in each job type. Educators in these fields face often staggering caseloads and shrinking pipelines to fill these critical positions, underscoring the importance of our efforts to recruit and retain them through simple changes like this bill proposes. This would also incentivize our most experienced professionals to stay and serve students and mentor colleagues who are earlier in their careers. Again, they've earned the top accreditation it's just not under the National Board because National Board doesn't offer it for their subject area.

The bill would remove unworkable language concerning the career ladder requirement that assistant principals spend 20% of their time as a teacher of record and the remainder of their time engaged in other teaching activities.

Schools need assistant principals to address student discipline, lead special education team meetings, serve as observers in the evaluation system, and support good teaching and strong professional growth systems. They also handle emergencies that can occur throughout the day with no warning. The current statute precludes such duties being assigned to an assistant principal on the career ladder. Adding teaching duties to already overworked assistant principals while preventing them from carrying out key functions of their job is a recipe for increasing rather than addressing shortages



among these important educators. This change will encourage assistant principals to take part in classroom instruction through co-teaching, model teaching, substituting, but won't require them to be the teacher of record.

The bill would remove limitations on who can write curriculum and assessments for content areas in a district. Currently, the statute only permits distinguished and professor distinguished teachers to be selected to write curriculum and assessment items and to develop model lessons. Given how few educators would find themselves on these rungs of the career ladder due to its relatively recent introduction, this language is not workable. If the current statute is maintained, it would lead to severely overburdening a small number of educators and burning them out extremely quickly. It could also result in a delay in curriculum and assessment creation and delivery.

MSEA strongly urges a favorable report of Senate Bill 791.

weeden shannon written testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: C'Rai Weeden Shannon

Position: FAV

March 1, 2023

Senator Brian Feldman, Chairman
Education, Energy & Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Senator Guy Guzzone, Chairman
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways & Means Committee
131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SUPPORT with Amendment, SB 791 / HB 883 – Public School – Job Duties & Salaries

Dear Chairman Feldman, Chairman Guzzone, and Chair Atterbeary:

My name is C’Rai Weeden Shannon. I am a mother of a child that receives school-based speech-language pathology services in the state of Maryland. In addition, I am a Maryland licensed speech language pathologist. I work as an adjunct professor and clinical instructor of graduate students pursuing their master’s degree in the field of speech-language pathology at Towson University. In addition I am the past president of the Maryland Speech-Language-Hearing Association (MSHA) representing speech-language pathologists and audiologists living and working in Maryland.

I am writing to you in support of Senate Bill 791/HB 883 which would provide salary supplements to speech language pathologists in Maryland public schools with advanced credentials like those offered to my teacher colleagues through the Blueprint legislation. Speech-language pathologists provide direct, specialized instruction to students with disabilities and are solely responsible and accountable for their Individualized Education Program communication goals. Our advanced national certification – the American Speech Language Hearing Association Certificate of Clinical Competence (ASHA CCC-SLP) – requires that we hold a Master’s degree in speech pathology, complete a clinical fellowship, pass a standardized national exam, and rate highly through a peer review of our practice (Clinical Fellowship Skills Inventory – 21 skills rated based on 18 hours of direct observation of our practice and 18 hours of indirect review of written products, etc). The ASHA CCC-SLP is as rigorous as National Board Teaching Certification.

Speech-language pathology is the 3rd biggest staff shortage area in Maryland schools according to the Maryland State Department of Education. Salary supplements will help recruit, hire, and retain highly-qualified speech language pathologists to meet the needs

of Maryland children. Currently, districts are using contractors, virtual services, providing compensatory FAPE awards, or paying for private special education schools which cost millions of dollars more than adequately staffing our schools with direct hire speech language pathologists. At least 21 states and hundreds of local jurisdictions offer salary supplements to speech-language pathologists who hold the national CCC-SLP credential for this very purpose. Many who offer salary supplements to teachers with NBTC offer the same supplement to speech-language pathologists with CCC-SLP. Maryland's Blueprint is a historic piece of legislation that will make a difference in the lives of countless children. Please ensure our children with disabilities have the same experience and access to the high-quality speech therapy services they deserve.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C'rai Weeden Shannon". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

C'Rai Weeden Shannon

SB 791 - Public School Employees Pay.pdf

Uploaded by: Denise Riley

Position: FAV



A Union of Professionals
AFT-Maryland

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Kenya Campbell
PRESIDENT

LaBrina Hopkins
SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Written Testimony to the Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee
SB 791 - Primary and Secondary Education - Public School Employees –
Job Duties and Salaries
March 3, 2023**

SUPPORT

Chair Feldman and members of the committee, on behalf of the American Federation of Teachers - Maryland (AFT-MD), which represents more than 20,000 members including the Baltimore Teachers' Union (BTU), we urge you to support SB 791.

This bill would expand state salary increases available to National Board Certified (NBC) teachers, to qualified educators currently not eligible. These would include reading and math specialists, school counselors, literacy interventionists, gifted and talented specialists, and others who are important to the academic success students. A level playing field is important to ensure highly qualified educators in these positions stay in them rather than move to NBC-eligible positions.

Other positions such as school psychologists and speech pathologists, in some cases are not eligible for NBC but have the ability to gain national certification from other accreditation bodies. The Maryland State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board would vet and determine what the appropriate and applicable accreditations are in each job type. These positions face shrinking pipelines to fill them, which shows the importance of simple changes like this bill proposes.

This bill would remove unworkable career ladder requirement that assistant principals spend 20% of their time engaged in teaching activities. Assistant principals are needed to address student discipline, serve as observers in the evaluation system, and support strong professional growth systems. Adding teaching duties to already overworked assistant principals prevents them from carrying out key functions of their job.

Finally, the bill would remove the statute that permits only distinguished and professor distinguished teachers to write curriculum and to develop model lessons. There are few educators at that level which makes this provision unworkable. For these reasons, we again ask for a favorable report on SB 791. Thank you.

MSHA Legislation SB 791 and HB 883 Support Letter

Uploaded by: Dr. Alicia Spoor

Position: FAV



Maryland Academy of Audiology

P.O. Box 710

Parkville, MD 21234

<https://maaudiology.org/>

March 1, 2023

Senator Brian Feldman, Chairman
Education, Energy & Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways & Means Committee
131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SUPPORT, SB 791 / HB 883 – Public School – Job Duties & Salaries

Dear Chairman Feldman and Chair Atterbeary:

On behalf of the Maryland Academy of Audiology, we are writing to support SB 791 and HB 883, Public School – Job Duties & Salaries.

Speech-language pathology is the sister profession to audiology and the two professions often work together to maximize patients' receptive and expressive communication abilities. Licensed speech-language pathologists (SLP) hold a minimum master's level degree from an accredited university and certification of clinical competence (CCC-SLP) from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The level of education and training verifies that SLPs have the same rigor of standards as teachers and special educators who benefit from this piece of legislation. Enacting SB 791 and HB 883 and including SLPs would help school systems fill employment vacancies, thereby saving the district a significant amount of money as the need to hire outside contract SLPs would cease. Additionally, students will benefit from having on-site services provided, in-person, by the same SLP each session.

The MAA represents more than 525 licensed Audiologists who practice in the state of Maryland, and the patients they serve. The MAA's goal is to enhance the ability of members to achieve career and practice objectives by fostering professional autonomy, providing quality continuing education, and increasing public and consumer awareness of hearing and balance disorders and the value of audiologic services. By virtue of education and licensure, Audiologists are the most qualified professionals to manage hearing and balance disorders. An Audiologist is a state-licensed professional who specializes in evaluating, diagnosing, treating, and managing patients with hearing



MARYLAND ACADEMY OF
AUDIOLOGY

Maryland Academy of Audiology

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loss, tinnitus, and balance (vestibular) disorders. Audiologists work in a variety of settings: private practice offices, hospitals, medical centers, out-patient clinics, public and private schools, universities (teaching and research), regulatory agencies, large-scale research centers, rehabilitation centers, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, the Veterans Administration, and the U.S. Military. Audiologists work closely with federal, state, and private third-party payers to optimize coverage of services provided for the evaluation and treatment of the patients in their care.

Thank you for your time and consideration and to Senators Elfreth and Kramer and Delegate Feldmark for sponsoring this legislation. I ask for a favorable committee report on SB 791 and HB 883.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leigh McCarthy, AuD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leigh McCarthy, Au.D.
Doctor of Audiology
President, MAA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alicia D.D. Spoor, Au.D.". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alicia D.D. Spoor, Au.D.
Doctor of Audiology
Legislative Chair, MAA

2023 MSCA SB 791 Senate Side FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Dr. Nikki Hamm

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 791 – Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Job Duties and Salaries

Hearing Date: March 1, 2023

Position: Support

The Maryland School Counselor Association (MSCA) supports *Senate Bill 791 – Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Job Duties and Salaries*. The bill provides salary increases for certain school personnel to improve recruitment and retention.

MSCA believes that school counselors may already be covered under the Blueprint legislation. However, there has been significant confusion in implementation of the Blueprint legislation. MSCA has made some progress in obtaining clarity. After MSCA wrote to the Accountability Implementation Board (AIB), the AIB acknowledged the career ladder covered school counselors.

We believe that SB 791 offers a clear path for acknowledgement that salary increases are needed to recruit and retain school counselors. Just like teachers, school counselors can obtain the additional credential of National Board Certification (NBC). We need to employ a comprehensive strategy, including salary incentives, to address the shortage of school counselors in Maryland. The Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education’s 2019 report adopted the nationally recommended ratio of 250 students per school counselor. However, per MSDE data, many of our counties are significantly below this recommended ratio, with several counties having over 1,000 students per counselor.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

Casper791:883.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Casper

Position: FAV



March 1, 2023

Senator Brian Feldman, Chairman
Education, Energy & Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Senator Guy Guzzone, Chairman
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways & Means Committee
131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SUPPORT SB 791 / HB 883 – Public School – Job Duties & Salaries

Dear Chairman Feldman, Chairman Guzzone and Chair Atterbeary,

My name is Mary Casper. I am a resident of District 15, a Maryland-licensed speech-language pathologist, and currently serve as President of the Maryland Speech-Language-Hearing Association (MSHA) representing speech-language pathologists and audiologists living and working in Maryland.

MSHA believes the passage of SB 791 / HB 883 is essential to ensure recruitment, retention, and adequate staffing of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in Maryland public schools.

Maryland's shortage of SLPs in public schools limits the state's ability to meet the needs of Maryland's children and legal obligations force jurisdictions to pay for compensatory awards to families when those needs are not met. Currently, SLPs have the third highest rate of vacancies in Maryland schools (MSDE, Maryland's Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity, 2022). As a result, local jurisdictions pay millions more in education dollars to contract with SLPs rather than to hire local SLPs for the school system.

Staff shortages for SLPs is a national issue. Maryland school districts are competing with other states and medical facilities to recruit, hire, and retain qualified staff. Salary incentives will help districts competitively recruit and retain SLPs in Maryland schools so our students get the support they need.

MSHA asserts that SB 791 / HB 883 would allow Maryland schools to minimize use of contractual SLP staff. Districts are spending additional millions on contractual SLPs each year due to staff shortages. Hundreds of contractors are temporarily filling the unstaffed positions at a cost of approximately \$500 to \$700 per day and on an annual basis up to \$40,000 or more for each contractual SLP than if a full-time SLP were hired for the school.

Local education agencies directly hiring SLPs versus contracting with outside agencies represents a long-term investment in the local community. Directly-hired SLPs participate in staff meetings, mandatory trainings, and can become versed and invested in key educational initiatives for children with communication disorders, like trauma-informed care and literacy. Directly-hired SLPs have the opportunity to form relationships with children, parents, teachers, and other educational support staff whereas contractors often work virtually and are unlikely to engage in the activities creating expertise over time.

MSHA asserts that fully staffing Maryland schools with directly-hired SLPs by offering salary incentives as cited in SB 791 / HB 883 will be a net savings for Maryland education expenditures. The cost of separation, recruitment, hiring, and training has been estimated to cost between \$9,000 and \$21,000 per staff member. (Maryland's Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity, 2022).

MSHA's aim is to maximize student success. The recruitment and retention of highly-qualified SLPs supported by SB 791 / HB 883 would allow students to receive timely speech therapy services rather than missing speech therapy due to lack of staff experience. Delays can result in increased time in special education and the need for more services over time, which is harmful to children and more expensive to Maryland.

Maryland now offers salary supplements of \$10,000 and \$17,000 to educators who hold National Board Teaching Certification (NBTC) through the Blueprint legislation.

SLPs participate in classroom activity involving direct interactions with students. We provide direct specialized instruction to students with disabilities and are solely responsible for Individualized Education Program (IEP) communication goals, however Pearson (the private company running the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) does not have a category for SLPs in their NBTC standards, making us ineligible for salary supplements in the Blueprint.

SB 791 / HB 883 will allow for salary supplements to be "awarded to an educator for meeting high-quality standards on an assessment in a professional field or specialty that does not have NBC standards." Passage of these bills will impact educational outcomes for students who qualify for speech and language services.

SLPs are highly-qualified educators. They complete their course of study to obtain a Master's degree, spend 36 weeks of full time work under supervision as Clinical Fellows, and can then obtain the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

On the website asha.org, the CCC is described as a nationally recognized professional credential that represents a level of excellence in the field of Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP). Those who have achieved the CCC—ASHA certification—have voluntarily met rigorous academic and professional standards, typically going beyond the minimum requirements for state licensure. They have the knowledge, skills, and expertise to provide high quality clinical services, and they actively engage in ongoing professional development to keep their certification current.

ASHA is the nation's leading professional, credentialing, and scientific organization for speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and speech/language/hearing scientists. ASHA initiated the development of national standards for the professions and has been certifying professionals since 1952.

ASHA's certification standards are based on skills validation studies and practice analyses involving employers, leaders in the discipline of communication sciences and disorders, and practitioners in the professions of speech-language pathology. ASHA certification is not contingent upon membership in any professional organization.

Maryland is offering salary supplements to teachers, including special educators, who achieve the NBTC credential. SB 791 / HB 883 would offer the same opportunity to SLPs who work in public schools and hold a comparable national certification (ASHA's CCC). These credentials are equally rigorous, both requiring a national examination and peer review of skill. Without SB 791 / HB 883, Maryland stands to lose money and human resources to meet the needs of children with communication disorders in our schools.

MSHA supports SB 791 / HB 883 as an important and necessary component of assuring the best educational outcomes for students in Maryland schools.

If you have questions, you or your staff may contact MSHA at 301-304-7001 or reach me on my personal cell at 301-456-4723 or via e-mail president@mdslha.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Lee Casper". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary L. Casper, MA, CCC-SLP, ASHA Fellow, FNAP

MSHA President

Maryland District 15 resident

SB 791 HB 883 Miskowski Written Testimony (2).pdf

Uploaded by: Megan Miskowski

Position: FAV

Megan Miskowski, M.S., CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist

March 1, 2023

Senator Brian Feldman, Chairman
Education, Energy & Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Senator Guy Guzzone, Chairman
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways & Means Committee
131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SUPPORT SB 791 / HB 883 – Public School – Job Duties & Salaries

Dear Chairman Feldman, Chairman Guzzone and Chair Atterbeary:

My name is Megan Miskowski. I am a mother and licensed speech language pathologist (SLP) in Maryland. I have worked in Baltimore City Public Schools for almost 15 years. I am a member of the Maryland Speech Language Hearing Association, Baltimore Teacher's Union, and I am a past president of the Association of Baltimore Community Speech Language Pathologists. I teach undergraduate Communication Sciences and Disorders students at the Women's Institute of Torah Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland. I am a doctoral candidate in Speech Language Pathology at MGH Institute of Health Professions. I am writing in favor of SB 791/HB 883.

It is vital that Maryland pass SB 791/HB 883 to ensure adequate staffing of speech-language pathologists in Maryland public schools and maximize our fiscal resources. Through the Blueprint legislation, Maryland now offers salary supplements of \$10,000 and \$17,000 to educators who hold National Board Teaching Certification (NBTC).

Just like our special education teacher colleagues, speech-language pathologists provide direct specialized instruction to students with disabilities and are solely responsible for Individualized Education Program (IEP) communication goals. Unlike our special education teacher colleagues, we are not eligible for National Board Teaching Certification which is the trigger mechanism for salary supplements in the Blueprint. This leaves speech language pathologists out of an important recruitment and retention tool that is desperately needed in Maryland. SB 791/HB 883 will correct this oversight.

Megan Miskowski, M.S., CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) reports that speech language pathology is currently the 3rd biggest staff shortage area in Maryland schools (MSDE, Maryland's Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity, 2022) with only special educators and general elementary educators in greater demand. This not only causes significant harm to Maryland students but also financial damage to school districts.

When districts lack adequate staff, the obligation to provide speech therapy to students with disabilities does not disappear. School systems hire expensive contractors, resign themselves to expensive virtual services for in person students, pay out Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) compensatory awards for missed services, or agree to very expensive private special education school placements due to our failure to provide the required services.

In Baltimore City Public Schools, we have 153 full time speech language pathology positions. About 50 of those positions are currently staffed using contractors with an annual budget of \$6 million dollars. On average it costs Baltimore City and other local school jurisdictions about \$40,000 per year to contract out for one speech-language pathologist versus hiring and retaining a full-time SLP. Simply by getting this salary supplement and hiring SLPs who will be present at the schools and reside in Maryland, Baltimore City can save that difference between the extra contractual payments of \$40,000 per SLP, times the number of contracted out SLPs in Baltimore City, 50, for a total savings of over \$2 million dollars alone.

To put it another way, by granting speech-language pathologists the salary supplement, we can reduce the fiscal note by \$2 million dollars in just one jurisdiction alone and millions more statewide. We believe, compared to other 'high-quality educators', we are unique in this fiscal and educational benefit to the state.

Contractual staffing companies charge between approximately \$550 and \$750 per day for each SLP. Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Baltimore County, and others have had to resort to contractual virtual services for in-person students in addition to in-person contractors. They are paying not only for the virtual speech language pathologist but paraeducators to sit with students as they Zoom from their classrooms.

MSDE State Complaint Letters of Finding show that families are furious that their children are not receiving speech therapy or being forced to receive virtual services while attending in person due to lack of staff (Compliant # 22-080, 22-098, 22-101, 22-097, 22-119, 22-069, 22-045, 22-060, 22-074, 22-123).

If speech therapy services are missed, IEP Teams are required to address it at the next IEP Meeting. School districts provide Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) Compensatory Award which are payments to provide the services that were missed. This can easily be \$2000 per student. Some families unilaterally enrolled their child in a private special education school when the public school misses services, delays assessment, or fails to hold an IEP Meeting because of lack of staff. A year at Gateway, a private school for children with communication disorders, costs approximately \$150,000 per student. Other private special education placements cost much more. If a family disagrees with a speech therapy assessment that was conducted virtually, they can demand an Independent Education Evaluation (IEE) which cost between \$800 and \$1200.

Megan Miskowski, M.S., CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist

Speech language pathologists are unique educators in the Maryland public schools because we are all required to hold a Maryland Department of Health license. School districts bill Medicaid for every therapy session and assessment we conduct. We help bring in federal revenue. In Baltimore City Public Schools, the majority of our student body is Medicaid eligible. We receive approximately \$150 for per assessment and \$25 for every therapy session for every student – sometimes more based on assessment and session type. The average speech-language pathologist in Baltimore City will bring in \$52,000 in Medicaid revenue per year. Unstaffed speech language pathology positions cause compounding financial harm.

When students miss speech therapy because of staffing, the harm is much more than fiscal. Developmental and language delays are extended and intensified. Behavior issues develop when students are frustrated and cannot communicate. Elementary students cannot build strong reading, writing, and spelling skills on a poor foundation of language. Older students with disabilities need functional communication skills into order to transition to the workplace or maximize their independence. These issues have financial harms as well but the damage to our students and their families is so much more.

Maryland must include speech language pathologists in the salary supplement framework. We are spending millions and millions of dollars beyond what it would cost to simply adequately recruit and staff these positions. In short, by granting speech-language pathologists a pathway for the salary supplement, we can reduce the fiscal note in these bills by eliminating the high local education area expenses for contracted out speech language pathologists by millions of dollars.

Many states and cities across the U.S. provide salary supplements to teachers who hold NBTC. Faced with their own shortages of speech-language pathologists, these jurisdictions have elected to provide the same salary supplements to speech-language pathologists who hold the American Speech Hearing Language Association's Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech Language Pathology (ASHA CCC-SLP). This advanced national credential consists of the same components as NBTC and is in fact more rigorous given the higher education requirement for entry into the profession and continuing education for maintaining the credential.

For example, Kentucky, Indiana, Page United School District in Arizona, and Papillion-LaVista School District in Nebraska all give salary supplements to teachers with NBTC and speech-language pathologists with CCC-SLP. Frederick County Public Schools (Maryland) agreed to provide salary supplements to teachers with NBTC or speech-language pathologists with CCC-SLP though the union contract.

The demand for speech-language pathologists is rising in both educational and medical settings. The projected job growth is at 21% through 2031 per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In 2018, more than half (54%) of ASHA Schools Survey respondents reported that job openings for speech language pathologists exceeded job seekers in their employment facility and geographic area.

Given the dire situation, many districts offer straight incentives for speech-language pathologists who work in public schools and hold CCC-SLP even if they do not award salary supplements for NBTC. Mississippi, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Nevada, West Virginia, Rhode Island, Delaware, Michigan, North Carolina, multiple school districts in California, and Chesterfield School District,

Megan Miskowski, M.S., CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist

VA all provide salary supplements to speech-language pathologists who work in public schools and hold the advance national CCC-SLP credential. I support MSHA's stance to clearly indicate that CCC-SLP is a high-quality certification within SB 791/HB 883.

I commend to the Committee, the chart at the end of my testimony comparing NBTC requirements to ASHA CCC-SLP. A fair reading of the requirements will show that speech-language pathologists have equivalent and even stricter requirements than teachers to be awarded national certification and to retain it after the award.

Finally, I will share my own personal story. I moved to Baltimore, Maryland from Tallahassee, Florida in 2008 with one year of experience as a speech-language pathologist. I interviewed at medical centers and, after researching the school district pay scales online, contractual staffing companies who would pay me more. I accepted a job with EBS Healthcare based in Pennsylvania. I interviewed and was placed in a position in Baltimore City Public Schools. After a few years, I wanted to become a direct hire with Baltimore City. I'd lost weeks of pay after the back-to-back blizzards in 2010 and knew I'd eventual want maternity leave. I decided that I'd rather have the security of a direct hire position than the extra money I earned as a contractor. Non-compete clauses in my contract with EBS and EBS's contract with Baltimore City Public Schools made transitioning to Baltimore City Schools as a direct hire a multiyear process.

When I transitioned to Baltimore City Schools as a direct hire in 2016, I took a \$10,000 pay cut. My total compensation package with nine years of experience, inclusive of my salary and individual health insurance, was \$77,141. Prior to becoming a direct hire, Baltimore City Schools paid EBS Healthcare approximately \$120,000 for my services. When I became a direct hire, Baltimore City Schools saved \$42,859 and had the same speech-language pathologist they had all those prior years. That year, I took a pay cut and Baltimore City Schools saved \$42,859.

Even today, in my current position, I am one of the highest paid speech language pathologists in Baltimore City and my family of four is on my health insurance. My total compensation package, inclusive of healthcare, is \$99,035.92. I am a highly skilled, specialized staff member with years of experience. Baltimore City Public Schools will spend almost \$21,000 more to Columbus or Stepping Stones Staffing on a brand new speech language pathologist fresh out of graduate school who is not even eligible for CCC-SLP.

This situation is repeating itself hundreds of times across Maryland. In Baltimore City, increasing just a portion of positions currently staffed by a contractor to a direct hire would easily cover the salary supplement for all of the eligible direct hire speech-language pathologists in the district. Maryland schools must close the pay gap.

SB 791/HB 883 will help Maryland stay competitive in the job market and make our public schools an attractive place to work for transplants and new graduates. In the original Blueprint legislation, specific professions were excluded from qualifying for the salary supplements and speech-language pathologists were *not* one of them. We are uniquely positioned because unlike other related services, speech therapy is considered specialized instruction under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Megan Miskowski, M.S., CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist

The need in speech language pathology is also greater - we are the 3rd biggest staffing shortage area in all of Maryland schools. On average, districts will save at least \$40,000 for every staff that is hired directly versus getting that same clinician through a contractual agency. Decreasing the use of contractual SLPs, virtual services, compensatory FAPE awards, out of district placements, independent education evaluations, and maximizing our Medicaid billing easily offset the salary supplements for speech language pathologists in our public schools who hold the national CCC-SLP certification. These clinicians hold advanced certification and maintain a high level of continuing education. This is the quality of care that children with disabilities in Maryland deserve.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Megan Miskowski". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "Thank you," text.

Megan Miskowski, M.S., CCC-SLP

Megan Miskowski, M.S., CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist

Comparing the Professions		
	Teacher	Speech-Language Pathologist
Education Requirement	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree
Alternate Career Entry Option (Teach for America, etc.)?	Yes	No
Required Credential	Maryland State Teaching Certificate	Maryland Department of Health License
Continuing Education Requirement for Mandatory Credential	6 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits every 5 years	30.0 Continuing Education Units every 24 months
Provides direct instruction?	Yes	Yes – per section 300.39 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) speech therapy is considered both a related service and specialized instruction
Primarily responsible and accountable for teaching the students	Yes	Yes – just like special education teachers speech-language pathologists are responsible and accountable for our students Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals
Comparing the Advanced Credential for National Certification		
	National Board Teaching Certificate (NBTC)	American Speech Language Hearing Association Certificate of Clinical Competence (ASHA CCC-SLP)
Exam	National Teachers' Exam	National Speech-Language Pathology exam
Peer-Review	Portfolio Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video of teaching - Written essays describing teaching 	Clinical Fellowship Skills Inventory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18 hours of direct observation and 18 hours of indirection observation (review of written work products, etc.) - Review of 21 clinical skills by a fully licensed and certificated speech language pathologists
Eligibility	3 years teaching	Masters Degree (2 years) and completed fellowship (1 year)
Maintenance	Complete Maintenance of Certification every 5 years which consisting of a portfolio submission of two components that are evaluated together and scored holistically.	Complete 30 professional development hours (PDHs) every 3 years. Must include at least 2 hours in cultural competency, cultural humility, culturally responsive practice, or diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and 1 hour in ethics.

BTU Testimony in Support of SB0791.pdf

Uploaded by: Nathan Ferrell

Position: FAV



AFT 340 AFL-CIO
Seton Business Park
5800 Metro Drive, 2nd Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0791

Primary and Secondary Education - Public School Employees - Job Duties and Salaries

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

March 1, 2023

1:00pm

The Baltimore Teachers Union supports Senate Bill 791, and urges a favorable report on this bill. Senate Bill 791 alters the implementation of the Blueprint career ladders by eliminating the requirement that school districts must select curriculum writers only from the distinguished teacher and professor distinguished teacher tiers of the teacher career. SB791 also establishes a process for educators whose content area or position don't have a National Board certifying process to qualify for NBC salary increases by meeting a similar criterion accepted by the State Board of Education and the Professional Teaching Standards Education Board. Finally, SB791 also replaces the 20% teaching requirement for assistant principals to a broader definition of direct instructional interactions with students.

The Baltimore Teachers Union represents 8,280 teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, clinicians, librarians, secretaries, community school site specialists, bus transportation aides, and many more school-based and central office support staff. We are 4 out of 5 workers in Baltimore City Public Schools, serving 75,595 students and their families. Our national union, the American Federation of Teachers, has over 1.7 million members in the United States and its territories.

SB 791 would expand eligibility for all salary increases that are currently limited to Nationally Board Certified (NBC) teachers to additional highly qualified educators. There are many educators who have National Board Certifications but are currently not eligible for the state portion of the salary increases (\$10,000 for NBC and \$7,000 more for teaching in an identified low-performing school). This bill would expand eligibility for these increases to educators teaching in critical shortage areas like reading and math specialists, school counselors, literacy interventionists, gifted and talented specialists, and more who are important to the daily instruction and success for students.

Importantly, SB791 establishes an alternative high-quality educator credential. The alternative high-quality educator credential can be awarded to an educator for meeting high quality standards on an assessment in a professional field or specialty that does not have NBC standards

and that has been approved jointly by the state board and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB.)

The bill would expand eligibility for these salary increases to behavioral health and other school-based student service providers who obtain highly regarded national accreditation in their profession. School psychologists, speech pathologists, and others who work directly with students in some cases are not eligible for National Board Certification but have the ability to gain national certification from other accreditation bodies.

The bill would remove limitations on who can write curriculum and assessments for content areas in a district. Currently, the statute only permits distinguished and professor distinguished teachers to be selected to write curriculum and assessment items and to develop model lessons. Given how few educators would find themselves on these rungs of the career ladder due to its relatively recent introduction, this language is not workable. If the current statute is maintained, it would lead to severely overburdening a small number of educators and burning them out extremely quickly.

SB 791 provides much needed clarification to ensure the transformative work of the Blueprint is achieved and that Maryland public schools are able to attract, retain and advance the careers of all of our dedicated educators and related service providers that support our school communities.

BTU urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 791.

BBG_ (3).pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Augustine

Position: FAV

February 26, 2023

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Senator Simonaire,

My name is Jeremy Caruso. I live in Severna Park (Oakham Court in district 31) and both myself and my wife are teachers in AACPS. We are writing **in support for SB791/HB 833** which would provide salary supplements to speech language pathologists in Maryland public schools with advanced credentials (SLP-CCC).

Our daughter, Camden, just qualified for speech services through an IEP. We are lucky that Camden can get direct services with a speech language pathologist (SLP-CCC) through AACPS. Our family and her teachers are already seeing the difference and we count ourselves lucky. In the state of Maryland SLPs are the third largest vacancy and the AACPS department that services children ages 3-5 years old has had/continues to have 3 slp vacancies. We are in support of this bill to help retain and recruit SLP-CCCs to the school system.

In AACPS, due to the high number of vacancies, the county has budgeted for SLP contractor and virtual SLPs. Can you imagine a 4 year-old practicing speech sounds in front of a computer? Think about the money that would be saved if instead of paying the contract companies (at least \$40,000 a hire) and/or an adult to sit in the room during the virtual speech sessions we could give the \$10,000 supplement to our direct hire SLP-CCC. This would make Maryland school, especially AACPS, a more desirable place to work.

Please ensure our children with disabilities, such as my daughter, have the same experience and access to the high-quality speech therapy services they deserve. **Please vote in favor of SB 791/HB833**

Thank you for your attention

Jeremy and Emily Caruso

February 27, 2023

Senator Brian Feldman, Chairman
Education, Energy, & Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Senator Guy Guzzone, Chairman
Senate Budget Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways & Means Committee
131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

From: Ms. Rachael Caruso
1311 Webster Street
Baltimore, MD 21230

Re: SUPPORT SB 791 / HB 883 – Public School – Job Duties and Salaries

Dear Chairman Feldman, Chairman Guzzone and Chair Atterbeary:

My name is Rachael Caruso. I am a speech language pathologist (SLP) in Anne Arundel County Schools (AACPS) and live in Baltimore City. I have been working in the field since 2010 and obtained my Certificate of Clinical Competence (SLP-CCC) in 2011. I currently work with 3-to-5 year olds through Community Based Services and provide services in preschools, homes, and daycares in the Glen Burnie, Pasadena, and North Anne Arundel County areas.

I am writing in favor of Senate Bill 791/HB 833.

The demand for speech-language pathologists is rising in both educational and medical settings. The projected job growth is at 21% through 2031 per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In 2018, more than half (54%) of ASHA Schools Survey respondents reported that job openings for speech language pathologists exceeded job seekers in their employment facility and geographical area.

A recent email from our AACPS SLP manager stressed how our field is operating under a critical shortage. For me, this means higher caseloads and having to work with larger groups (sometimes four-to-five, 3-to-4 year olds) during one, 30-minute session. It also means less time coaching daycare teachers and families, which impacts carryover of skills around the home and community. My colleagues and I are getting burnt out; some are even leaving the profession altogether or going to hospital/rehab settings for higher pay.

SLPs provide direct, specialized instruction to students with disabilities and are solely responsible and accountable for their Individualized Education Program (IEP) communication goals. We are the only professionals to target areas such as articulation, stuttering, and expressive/receptive languages on IEPs.

Our national certification (SLP-CCC) is an advanced credential and just as/perhaps more rigorous as the National Board Teaching Certification. We need a master's degree, pass a national examination, complete a Clinical Fellowship Year that requires us to be evaluated at different periods across 21 skills, and then need to complete 30 professional development hours every three years. A National Board Teaching Certification only requires a national test, three years of teaching, portfolio review, and Complete Maintenance of Certification every 5 years

The salary supplement will help retain and recruit highly qualified SLP-CCC to Maryland Public Schools. Over 20 states/jurisdictions in the U.S.A already offer some type of salary supplement for SLP-CCC. Due to the staffing shortages, school systems across Maryland are hiring contractors and paying at least \$40,000 to contract companies instead of investing in direct hires. Contract companies are costing school districts across Maryland from Western Maryland, Baltimore City/County, Anne Arundel County, and the Eastern Shore hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars. While the salary supplement for SLP-CCC will be expensive, it is not as expensive as the money going to these out-of-state contract companies. In addition, as SLP-CCC, we can bill Medicaid for our services and assessments. In turn, this brings money into our local school systems to also help offset the cost of the salary supplement.

Maryland must include speech language pathologists in the salary supplement framework. Our SLP-CCC is an advanced credential that is as rigorous as the NBCT. By granting SLP-CCC the salary supplement, we can reduce the fiscal note in these bills by eliminating the high cost (millions of dollars) local school jurisdictions are paying for contractual services. SLP-CCC provides direct services, and in many instances, brings in Federal revenue through Medicaid Billing. The children of Maryland deserve highly qualified SLP-CCC and fully staffed school districts to meet their communication needs.

Thank you very much for your assistance with this important matter.

Respectfully yours,

Rachael Caruso MS CCC-SLP

Rcaruso114@gmail.com

410-491-0229

Gloria Jeanne Petit-Clair
434 Peach Court
Annapolis, MD 21409
February 26, 2023
SB0791/HB0883

Senator Guy Guzzone
Chairperson, Senate Budget and Taxation
3 West Miller Senate Office
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21041

Senator Guzzone,

I support passage of SB791/HB833 which is part of an effort to provide increased funding for speech-language pathologists as part of the Blueprint for Education. I'm a Speech-Language Pathologist and a member of Maryland Speech-Language Hearing Association.

I am now retired after a 50-year career, practicing in public schools, health-care facilities, and university training. I advocated for speech-language pathologists and the consumers of our services through my positions on the Health Department's Licensure Board, the MSDE Speech-Language Pathology Board, as President of MSHA, Director of Public Policy and as a member of ASHA's Advisory Council.

I have followed and supported the growth of our profession since 1967. I am troubled by the status of SLPs in the public-school setting and its impact on the parents and students who must, by law, receive free, appropriate, and accessible services.

I have never seen my colleagues stretched this thin in their ability to deliver services, because of an increasing need for mandated services and a declining pool of available professionals. This shortfall is being felt across the state of Maryland. The Pandemic certainly contributed to the need for services, but the shortage started long before that.

SLPs who entered their career in the years 1970-1995 are eligible for retirement. Who will replace them? MD is home to 4 university training programs and only a small percentage of those graduates stay in MD. The cost of living is high and SLPs are looking for a better return on their education investment. Every LEA is recruiting SLPs. To provide mandated services, LEAs are rotating support SLPs into the buildings. But that can only go so far to meet the need.

LEAs are contracting with Rehab Agencies to provide services, even using Telehealth. In addition to the costs associated with contracting companies, the LEA must absorb the cost of hiring a TA to escort the child from the classroom and back, set up the video link and assist the child during the session. That is neither cost effective nor productive.

SLPs are the only service providers that can bill Medicaid for Medicaid for eligible students. Yes, the SLPs generate income for the LEA. When an SLP is missing, it's a huge loss to the students, but also a financial loss for the schools.

Before 2000, LEAs were able to provide short term coverage for vacant positions caused by leaves of absence or unexpected relocations. Arrangements could be made for short-term coverage. In 2005, Anne Arundel Co. created the position of a "floater", now called a "Interim Service Provider." I was that "floater" and provided the needed services in a particular school for a few months. Then I'd move on to the next position.

A few years later, the needs for coverage grew and within a few years, there was a team of 5 SLPs called, "Interim Service Providers" to cover all the vacant spots.

But now the needs for SLPs are out of control. Retirements are increasing, children are missing mandated sessions and the costs for contractual services are escalating. Something must be done to not only enable LEAs to recruit and retain SLPs, but to provide continuing support to SLPs in their clinical journey.

I believe that SB 07091/ HB 883 is a step in the right direction. It recognizes our national certification through the ASHA as the highest standard in the profession. The CCCs require a master's degree, successful passage of the national Praxis Exam, and completion of a supervised Clinical Fellowship.

Thank you for your time and attention. I ask for a favorable report for SB791/HB833

Gloria Jeanne Petit-Clair, M. ED

Speech-Language Pathologist, ASHA 36020

MD. License 00259

Anne Arundel County-Retired

434 Peach Court

Annapolis, MD 21409

February 28, 2023

Chairwoman Atterbeary, Chairman Feldman, and Chairman Guzzone,

I am a Speech-Language Pathologist in Anne Arundel County Public Schools and a resident of Annapolis, Maryland. I am writing to you in support of Senate Bill 791/HB 883 which would provide salary supplements to Speech-Language Pathologists in Maryland public schools with advanced credentials like those offered to my teacher colleagues through the Blueprint legislation.

Speech-Language Pathologists provide direct, specialized instruction to students with disabilities and are solely responsible and accountable for their Individualized Education Program (IEP) communication goals. Our advanced national certification – the American Speech Language Hearing Association Certificate of Clinical Competence (ASHA CCC-SLP) – requires that we hold a Master’s degree in speech pathology, complete a clinical fellowship, pass a standardized national exam, and rate highly through a peer review of our practice (Clinical Fellowship Year). I completed my Clinical Fellowship year with Anne Arundel County Public Schools. I completed the Clinical Fellowship Skills Inventory. The Clinical Fellowship Skills Inventory occurs over the CF year – 21 skills rated based on 18 hours of direct observation of our practice and 18 hours of indirect review of written products, etc. I believe that the ASHA CCC-SLP is at least as rigorous as the National Board Teaching Certification. I am attaching a document which compares the requirements for CCC and for NBT.

Speech-language pathology is the 3rd biggest staff shortage area in Maryland schools according to the Maryland State Department of Education. Salary supplements will help recruit, hire, and retain highly-qualified speech language pathologists to meet the needs of Maryland children. Currently, districts are using contractors, virtual services, providing compensatory FAPE awards, or paying for private special education schools which cost millions of dollars more than adequately staffing our schools with direct hire speech language pathologists. At least 21 states and hundreds of local jurisdictions offer salary supplements to Speech-language pathologists who hold the national CCC-SLP credential for this very purpose. Of note, Speech-Language Pathologists with the CCC are able to bill Medicaid for services and assessments. This brings in money to each school district.

Please vote in favor of SB 791/HB833 and consider an amendment on Page 3 line, 8, after the semicolon, insert: (II) A CERTIFICATE OF CLINICAL COMPETENCY (CCC-SLP) AWARDED BY THE AMERICAN SPEECH-LANGUAGE HEARING ASSOCIATION (ASHA)”. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Megan Reiter, M.A., CCC-SLP

805 Tyler Ave.

Annapolis, MD 21403

February 27, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Chairman Feldman, Chairman Guzzone, and Senator Simonaire:

I am a speech-language pathologist in Anne Arundel County Public School's Community Based Services and a resident of Severna Park, Maryland. I am writing to you in support of Senate Bill 791/HB 883 which would provide salary supplements to speech language pathologists in Maryland public schools with advanced credentials like those offered to my teacher colleagues through the Blueprint legislation.

I am currently working in a department with many open positions. My caseload is high and the students keep coming. I am expected to cover more kids in order to make sure they receive their services as written on their IEP. I can see the effect first hand on students when there are shortages. Groups are larger and the students get less individualized attention to help them meet their goals. I can't build relationships with families and their teachers in a way that will help them improve their skills when I have too high of a caseload. We need to find ways to attract and retain speech language pathologists so that all can receive quality services. I believe adding this supplement is a step in the right direction. Here are some other reasons to consider this.

- Speech-language pathologists provide direct, specialized instruction to students with disabilities and are solely responsible and accountable for their Individualized Education Program communication goals.
- Our advanced national certification – the American Speech Language Hearing Association Certificate of Clinical Competence (ASHA CCC-SLP) – requires that we hold a Master's degree in speech pathology, complete a clinical fellowship, pass a standardized national exam, and rate highly through a peer review of our practice (Clinical Fellowship Year)
- Clinical Fellowship Skills Inventory occurs over the CF year – 21 skills rated based on 18 hours of direct observation of our practice and 18 hours of indirect review of written products, etc
- The ASHA CCC-SLP is at least as rigorous as National Board Teaching Certification.
- Speech-language pathology is the 3rd biggest staff shortage area in Maryland schools according to the Maryland State Department of Education.
- Salary supplements will help recruit, hire, and retain highly-qualified speech language pathologists to meet the needs of Maryland children.
- Currently, districts are using contractors, virtual services, providing compensatory FAPE awards, or paying for private special education schools which cost millions of dollars more than adequately staffing our schools with direct hire speech language pathologists.
- At least 21 states and hundreds of local jurisdictions offer salary supplements to speech-language pathologists who hold the national CCC-SLP credential for this very purpose.

· SLP-CCC bill Medicaid for services and assessments. This brings in money to each school district.

I am asking you to please vote in favor of SB 791/HB833 and consider an amendment on Page 3 line, 8, after the semicolon, insert: (II) A CERTIFICATE OF CLINICAL COMPETENCY (CCC-SLP) AWARDED BY THE AMERICAN SPEECH-LANGUAGE HEARING ASSOCIATION (ASHA)”

Thank you for your consideration,

Kara Wilkinson

Elfreth_SB791_FAV.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Elfreth

Position: FAV

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH
Legislative District 30
Anne Arundel County



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 104
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3578 · 301-858-3578
800-492-7122 Ext. 3578
Fax 410-841-3156 · 301-858-3156
Sarah.Elfreth@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Pensions

Chair, Public Safety,
Transportation, and Environment

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area

Chair, Joint Subcommittee on
Program Open Space/Agricultural
Land Preservation

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 1, 2023

Testimony in Favor of SB0791
Primary and Secondary Education - Public School Employees - Job Duties and Salaries

Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 791 to implement targeted reforms and funding solutions to address the educator shortage impacting every jurisdiction across the State.

The bill would expand eligibility for salary increases that are currently limited to Nationally Board Certified (NBC) teachers to additional highly qualified educators. There are many teachers - who are not directly the teacher of record - who have National Board Certifications but are currently not eligible for the state portion of the salary increases (\$10,000 for NBC and \$7,000 more for teaching in an identified low-performing school). SB791 would expand eligibility for these increases to those teaching in critical shortage areas like reading and math specialists, department heads, school counselors, literacy interventionists, gifted and talented specialists, and more who are just as important to the daily instruction and success for students as the classroom teacher/teacher of record. Leveling the playing field is important to ensuring that highly qualified educators in these roles remain in our public schools. They have earned the national certifications, they work directly with students daily, and they should not be left out of the salary enhancement.

The bill would expand eligibility for these salary increases to behavioral health and other school-based student service providers who obtain highly regarded national accreditation in their profession. School psychologists, speech pathologists, social workers, and others who work directly with students are not eligible for National Board Certification but have the ability to gain national certification from equally prestigious accreditation bodies. Under the Bill, the

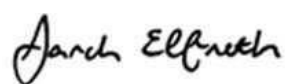
Maryland State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board would vet and determine what the appropriate and applicable accreditations are in each job type. Educators in these fields often face staggering caseloads and shrinking pipelines to fill these critical positions, underscoring the importance of our efforts to recruit and retain them through simple changes like this Bill proposes. This would also incentivize our most experienced professionals to stay and serve students and mentor colleagues who are earlier in their careers. Again, they have earned the top accreditation but are not eligible for bonuses under Blueprint.

The legislation will remove overly burdensome language around the career ladder requirements for assistant principals. In current law it is required that assistant principals teach in the classroom for at least 20% of the time and spend the remaining amount of their time on other teacher activities including setting priorities for the subject level departments of the school and fulfilling specialized roles. This legislation will remove those requirements and instead require that assistant principals participate in classroom activity involving direct interactions with students for at least 20% of their time.

Assistant principals remain a pillar of our schools – they are needed to address student discipline, lead special education team meetings, serve as observers in the evaluation system, and support strong professional growth systems. They also are consistently needed to handle emergencies that arise throughout the day-to-day operations of the schools. Yet, current law does not recognize this wide array of responsibilities put on our assistant principals and instead adds teaching duties to these already overworked staff - and prevents them from the key functions of their jobs.

This legislation will remove limitations around who can write curriculum and in doing so alleviate pressure on the select number of individuals currently authorized. Currently, only distinguished and professor distinguished teachers are permitted to be selected to develop curriculum, assessment items, and model lessons. The problem is that, due to its recent introduction, few educators find themselves at this level of the career ladder. If this language is not changed then it will not only lead to further burn out and overburdening of the small number of educators eligible for this responsibility, but also lead to delays in the creation and delivery of assessment creation and curriculum development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Elfreth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Elfreth

SB0791-EEE_MACo_SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Brianna January

Position: FWA



Senate Bill 791

Primary and Secondary Education - Public School Employees - Job Duties and Salaries

MACo Position: **SUPPORT WITH
AMENDMENTS**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment
and Budget and Taxation Committees

Date: March 1, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 791 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would pose an unexpected unfunded mandate on school systems to raise minimum salary requirements and provide bonuses for certain public school employees to match those currently targeted for teachers in The Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

The Blueprint was negotiated and settled just a few years ago to include substantial salary adjustments and base pay requirements for all of Maryland's public school teachers. Counties are actively working to meet those requirements and to prepare for these costly long-term benefits while remaining fiscally responsible to Maryland taxpayers. SB 791 would negate that preparatory work and the personnel compromises under the Blueprint.

It would be not only ill-advised public policy to revisit the extensive work of the Kirwan Commission and the subsequent multi-party negotiations that compose the Blueprint law, but it would also be financially distressing for counties as they work to implement other key, costly aspects of the Blueprint, like prekindergarten expansion and college and career readiness.

However, counties fully understand the intention and inclination to do so and share the goals of SB 791 to increase schoolhouse cohesion and better support of all school staff. **As such, counties propose a simple amendment to the bill instructing the State to appropriate adequate funds, annually, to pay for the increases in base salary and merit bonuses provided in SB 791.** By adopting this amendment, counties would be able to continue their work implementing the Blueprint and improving the public education experience for all Maryland students, without any costly disruptions imposed by the bill.

Counties are actively working to invest resources directly in Maryland students and their educators as they embark on implementing the largest educational reforms the state has undertaken in generations. Adding the substantial, unexpected, and unfunded mandates proposed by SB 791 would distract from the prioritization of Maryland students and would reroute designated funding from students to school personnel. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS SB 791 WITH AMENDMENTS** to provide the appropriate State aid to cover local expenses charged under the bill and urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report.

2023 MNA SB 791 Senate Side FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Catherine Ling

Position: FWA



Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 791 – Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Job Duties and Salaries

Hearing Date: March 1, 2023

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) strongly supports *Senate Bill 791 – Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Job Duties and Salaries*. The bill would create a pathway for salary increases for school nurses and other school health staff. This legislation embodies a critical strategy to recruit and retain nurses during a severe nursing shortage.

More School Nurses Needed in Maryland

The National Association of School Nurses has stated that “access to a school nurse all day, every day can improve students’ health, safety, and educational achievement.”ⁱ Maryland falls short of this goal with an average of 0.74 registered nurses for every school, according to data from the Maryland State Department of Education (see attached). There are wide gaps in access to school nursing. The following jurisdictions have less than the average school nurses per school: Anne Arundel (0.62), Baltimore City (0.30), Calvert (0.72), Frederick (0.38), Garret (no RNs in the school system), Kent (0.40), Montgomery (0.57), Somerset (0.67), and Washington (0.36).

Maryland needs just under 400 more nurses to reach the goal of a full-time nurse in every school. The number may be higher if we take into account that more than one nurse may be needed for larger schools.

Why Every School Needs a Nurse

Maryland needs a nurse in every school because students' health needs have become more complex. As we have seen as students return to in-person classes in recent months, students have layers of unmet health needs that impede their ability to learn and integrate into the classroom.

School nurses are essential to support:

- **Students with complex medical needs.** Children with complex needs are those with chronic, severe health conditions, major functional limitations, and substantial health service needsⁱⁱ School nurses are essential in ensuring these students can remain in school;
- **Students with increasing behavioral health needs.** Children and adolescents are facing a mental health crises. Youth suicide deaths have already been on the increase in Maryland. Between 2007 and 2018, youth suicide deaths rose by 21%. Now in the aftermath of the pandemic, children and adolescents are facing even greater risks. Leading health care organizations have declared a "National Emergency in Child and Adolescent Mental Health."ⁱⁱⁱ

Maryland is planning to make significant investments in behavioral health in schools in recognition of the youth behavioral health crises. Yet implementation of new behavioral health programs will be challenging in schools without a full-time nurses. School nurses coordinate all somatic and behavioral health services provided to students.

- **Students with chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma, and hypertension.** One-fourth of children have a chronic disease, and 5 % have multiple chronic conditions. The numbers of children with chronic conditions has been rising.^{iv} School nurses coordinate care with a student's primary care provider to manage student's chronic conditions and improve their health outcomes. School nurses administer treatments, including medication, to ensure students can remain in school.
- **Students in health emergencies.** It is estimated that 10-25% of emergencies for children occur while they are in school.^v School nurses are the key in managing those emergencies effectively.

How the Bill Would Help Address the School Nurse Shortage/Technical Amendment

Local jurisdictions are struggling to recruit and retain school nurses because of the broader nursing professional shortages. Health care programs and facilities generally have higher salaries, making it difficult for local jurisdictions to compete for nurses. The bill would help alleviate the salary gap for school nurses who meet the criteria as determined in the implementation of the bill.

We would suggest a technical amendment that acknowledges not all school health professionals have a national or advanced certification in the same manner as teachers or school counselors.

On page 3 in lines 23-24, revise the language to acknowledge that another criteria, other than a specific credential, may be appropriate for some school health professionals, as not all school health professionals have an additional certification or credential applicable to school health

(1) FOR AN INITIAL AWARD OF AN NBC, ~~OR~~ ALTERNATIVE HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATOR CREDENTIAL, OR FOR MEETING AN ALTERNATIVE MEASURE SUCH AS LENGTH OF SERVICE – \$10,000 SALARY INCREASE; AND

Conclusion

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://www.nasn.org/nasn-resources/professional-practice-documents/position-statements/ps-workload>

ii <https://www.childrenshospitals.org/issues-and-advocacy/children-with-medical-complexity/issue-briefs-and-reports/the-landscape-of-medical-care-for-children-with-medical-complexity>

iii <https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/child-and-adolescent-healthy-mental-development/aap-aacap-cha-declaration-of-a-national-emergency-in-child-and-adolescent-mental-health/>

iv <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5010981/#R41>

v <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article-abstract/122/4/887/71309/Medical-Emergencies-Occurring-at-School?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

SB 791.Public School Employees - Non Teacher Salar

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FWA



621 Ridgely Avenue, Suite 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-5414 · 800-841-8197 · Fax: 410-841-6580 · MABE.org

BILL: Senate Bill 791
TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Job Duties and Salaries
DATE: March 1, 2023
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment and Budget and Taxation
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports Senate Bill 791 toward the goal of including non-classroom teachers and other educators and education professionals within the scope of the significant salary increases and guaranteed minimum salaries provided by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

MABE has consistently supported efforts by the General Assembly to assist local school systems in addressing the critical shortages of not only highly qualified teachers but also other highly valued staff in every school across the State. At this time, Maryland is experiencing critical shortages across all of the educational and related services professional fields; a critical shortage of the staff needed to deliver and support student learning and to administer schools as educational leaders.

The pandemic heightened public awareness regarding the severity of scope of the mental and behavioral health needs of students, and the lack of adequate professional staff to meet these needs. MABE therefore supports the intent of Senate Bill 791 to include these staff in the benefits of the Blueprint. In this way, the Blueprint can be even more effective to recruit high school and college students to pursue degrees in fields such as school counseling, school psychology, and school social work. In addition, educators providing direct services to students, but not as classroom teachers, can be compensated based on their respective national certifications on par with their colleagues as they work side-by-side in schools. In this light, MABE urges consideration of future state investments in short and long-term solutions to providing the wide array of professional resources our students deserve. Senate Bill 791, if fully funded and given time to be incorporated in the Blueprint and state and local budgets, would contribute significantly to these ends.

Again, MABE firmly believes that the role of a full complement of qualified staff will be pivotal to the successful implementation of Blueprint for Maryland's Future and the highest benchmarks of student progress and success in attaining college and career readiness. However, the costs of expanding the scope of the Blueprint will be daunting and always competing for limited state and local revenues with other priorities such as expanding PreK.

All local boards of education value the essential role of each educator and staff person who work for the public school system as the key to educating and meeting the needs of our student. Unfortunately, Maryland continues to experiencing a major teacher shortage due to a number of factors including the low number of teacher candidates graduating from Maryland's universities, the number of potential teachers entering the profession, and the competitiveness of working condition and salaries. Again, MABE greatly appreciates that the Blueprint addresses these issues by mandating minimum salaries of \$60,000 for teachers, providing raises for teachers based on National Board Certification, and reducing the amount of time teachers are obligated to be in classrooms. However, the Blueprint inappropriately excludes many highly valued educators, essential to student success, from the salary increases and other provisions of the Blueprint. In addition, the Blueprint also mandates that assistant principals spend no less than 20% of their working time as teachers in classrooms. MABE supports the intent of the provision of Senate Bill 791 to replace the reference to classroom instruction with classroom activities, but requests that school-based activities with students also be included.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 791 and looks forward to further discussions on the initiatives proposed in this legislation and the amendments described above.

SB 791 MSPA Support w Amendments.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Peters

Position: FWA



February 28, 2023

Bill: Senate Bill 791– Primary and Secondary Education - Public School Employees - Job Duties and Salaries

Position: Support with Amendment

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, 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 in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state.

Senate Bill 791 mandates salary increases for qualified educators with a high-quality educator credential that has been jointly approved by the state board and the professional standards and teacher education board. Additionally, it increases salary for educators who are assigned to a low-performing school while maintaining national credentials.

There is currently a critical shortage of school psychologists in Maryland's public schools. The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a 1:500 ratio of school psychologists to students, and currently no county in Maryland meets that threshold, with many counties operating at double, triple, or quadruple the recommended ratio. Additionally, new research and data indicate that the mental and behavioral health needs of students are increasing, with almost 3 out of 5 adolescent girls reporting feelings of persistent sadness, and increases in suicide attempts of adolescents. Currently, school psychologists are operating at a critical shortage trying to meet the ever-increasing needs of Maryland's students. School psychologists across the state are experiencing burnout as a result of high caseloads and lack of support. For these reasons, MSPA is in support of salary increases for recruitment and retention of school psychologists across Maryland.

Many school psychologists in Maryland are Nationally Certified School Psychologists (NCSP). It is not required to maintain a national credential to practice in Maryland. These psychologists go above and beyond to meet these rigorous standards. Members who obtain this standard must complete 60 graduate semester hours minimum in a school psychology program, successfully complete a 1,200 clock hour supervised internship, build a portfolio demonstrating competencies in the domains of professional practice, and pass the School Psychology Praxis exam. Additionally, to maintain the credential, every three years school psychologists must log 75 hours of continuous professional development, including legal and ethical practice, cultural responsiveness training, and at least 10 hours from the National Association of School Psychologists approved providers.

Due to the rigorous nature of gaining and maintaining the NCSP credential, MSPA proposes an amendment to specify that the NCSP is a high-quality educator credential eligible for the mandated salary increases. We know that school psychologists are desperately needed in Maryland's schools. We urge the committee to assist us in prioritizing the recruitment and retention of school psychologists.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report. If we can provide any further information or be of assistance, please contact us at legislative@mSPAonline.org or Sarah Peters at speters@hbstrategies.us or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Phipps, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP
Committee Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association.

2023 MOTA SB 791 Senate Side FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Sonia Lawson

Position: FWA



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

PO Box 36401, Towson, Maryland 21286 ♦ www.mota-members.com

Committee:	Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Bill Number:	Senate Bill 791 – Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Job Duties and Salaries
Hearing Date:	March 1, 2023
Position:	Support with Amendments

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *Senate Bill 791 – Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Job Duties and Salaries*. This bill addresses would provide salary increases for certain school personnel, which would help address ongoing shortages in school-based health providers.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, recognized the importance of addressing teacher shortages and ensuring that all students have access to highly qualified teachers. To help the state achieve these goals the Blueprint created the “Career Ladder for Educators.” This program created a minimum teacher salary and created a tiered salary system to incentivize educators to achieve advanced education and credentials. MOTA strongly supported the Blueprint, including the teacher career ladder. However, we believe that there should be an extension to the Blueprint to help address shortages of school health providers.

Occupational therapists (OTs) and occupational therapy assistants (OTAs) provide important services to students that help ensure that all students are able to receive a high-quality education. Similar to how OTs and OTAs work with patients to address barriers to completing activities of daily living, we help many students address barriers to classroom participation and completing classroom activities. Without OTs and OTAs many students would not able to be educated even with the most highly qualified educators. Currently, school systems are having difficulty hiring and retaining OTs and OTAs because the salaries in our school system are not keeping up with salaries in private practice or other healthcare settings. This legislation would help attract and retain high quality OTs and OTAs so that all Maryland students are able to access a high-quality education.

We would suggest a technical amendment that acknowledges not all school health professionals have a national or advanced certification in the same manner as teachers or school counselors.

On page 3 in lines 23-24, revise the language to acknowledge that another criteria, other than a specific credential, may be appropriate for some school health professionals, as not all school health professionals have an additional certification or credential applicable to school health

(1) FOR AN INITIAL AWARD OF AN NBC, ~~OR~~ ALTERNATIVE HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATOR CREDENTIAL, OR FOR MEETING AN ALTERNATIVE MEASURE SUCH AS LENGTH OF SERVICE – \$10,000 SALARY INCREASE; AND

Thank you for your attention to this important bill. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

2023 SB791 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Deborah Brocato

Position: UNF



Opposition Statement SB791

Primary and Secondary Education - Public School Employees -
Job Duties and Salaries
Deborah Brocato, Legislative Consultant
Maryland Right to Life

We Oppose SB791

On behalf of our 200,000 followers across the state, we respectfully object to SB791. This bill expands the jobs and duties of public school employees in a broad manner that would extend beyond the academic curriculum, as well as bringing employees without teaching degrees to “write certain curriculum and assessment plans” of an unspecified nature. The bill also increases the salaries for public school employees who are now designated as “certified professional individual(s).” The vague language of the bill would allow for the hiring of individuals from the abortion industry for teaching in “health” areas and direct funding toward non-academic subjects. Maryland taxpayers should not be expected to pay the salaries of employees from the abortion industry. We urge an amendment be added excluding any funding from this bill to be used for abortion purposes.

Maryland is one of only 4 states that forces taxpayer funding of abortion. Maryland taxpayers are forced to subsidize the abortion industry through direct Maryland Medicaid reimbursements to abortion providers, through various state grants and contracts, and through pass-through funding in various state programs. Health insurance carriers are required to provide reproductive health coverage to participate with the Maryland Health Choice program. Programs involved in reproductive health policy include the Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Department of Health, Maryland Family Planning Program, maternal and Child Health Bureau, the Children’s Cabinet, Maryland Council on School Based Health Centers, Maryland for the Advancement of School Based Health, Community Health Resource Commission, Maryland Children’s Health Program (MCHP) and Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund.

Americans oppose taxpayer funding of abortion. Taxpayers should not be forced to fund elective abortions, which make up the vast majority of abortions committed in Maryland, and taxpayers should not be forced to fund the employees of the abortion industry and provide jobs for them in the school system. California has already begun to do this (<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/planned-parenthood-plans-to-infiltrate-high-schools>). Let’s not let this happen in Maryland. The 2023 Marist poll shows that 60% of Americans, pro-life and pro-choice, oppose taxpayer funding of abortion. 81% of Americans favor public funds being prioritized for health and family planning services that save the lives of mothers and their children including programs for improving maternal health and birth and delivery outcomes, well baby care and parenting classes.

Maryland Right to Life urges the addition of an amendment to exclude any funding for this bill to be used for abortion purposes. Without this amendment, we ask that you oppose this **SB791** in its entirety.