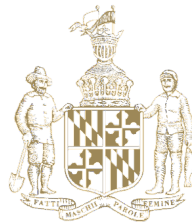


SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH
Legislative District 30
Anne Arundel County



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

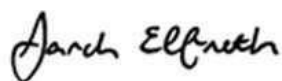
Maryland State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board would vet and determine what the appropriate and applicable accreditations are in each job type. Educators in these fields often face staggering caseloads and shrinking pipelines to fill these critical positions, 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