

BILL: House Bill 1219
TITLE: Maryland Educator Shortage Act of 2023
DATE: March 1, 2023
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: Karen Yoho, Chair, MABE Legislative Committee

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, supports House Bill 1219 which features key initiatives to make bold and innovative progress to alleviate critical teacher and educator shortages in Maryland's public schools.

MABE has consistently supported efforts by the General Assembly to assist local school systems in addressing the critical shortages of highly qualified teachers, principals, and other staff in every school and the classrooms of all students 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 Governor's Educator Shortage Act includes major initiatives to expand the alternative teacher certification program to include educators in prekindergarten programs, create a new Maryland Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Diversity Dashboard, have Maryland join the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact, reform the Teachers Fellows for Maryland scholarship program, and codify the Grow Our Own Educators Scholarship Program and Educator Internship Stipend Program. Through these programs, Maryland should be able to make meaningful progress toward recruiting and retaining high-quality and diverse educators from PreK through 12th grade. Importantly, House Bill 1219 closely aligns with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future provisions related to educator compensation and professionalism which are also intended to reduce the teacher shortage across the state.

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. The Blueprint features major expansions of full-day prekindergarten, student behavioral health services, college readiness courses, and career and technical education programs. Passage of House Bill 1219 will certainly advance the statewide effort to recruit, educate, and retain the professional educators essential to meet these objectives.

All local boards of education value the essential role of the educators and staff persons who work for the public school system as the keys to educating and meeting the needs of our students. Unfortunately, Maryland continues to experience 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 also mandates dramatically expanded full-day prekindergarten programs offered by public schools and private providers. Therefore, MABE appreciates that House Bill 1219 directly addresses the challenges to recruit and educate more early educators to meet these demands.

For these reasons, MABE urges a favorable report on House Bill 1219.