



House Bill 883

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

MACo Position: **SUPPORT WITH
AMENDMENTS**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: March 1, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 883 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. HB 883 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 HB 883 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 HB 883.** 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 HB 883 would distract from the prioritization of Maryland students and would reroute designated funding from students to school personnel. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS HB 883 WITH AMENDMENTS** to provide the appropriate State aid to cover local expenses charged under the bill and urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report.