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Testimony in Support of House Bill 0883

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

House Ways and Means Committee

March 1, 2023

1:00pm

The Baltimore Teachers Union supports House Bill 883, and urges a favorable report on this bill. House Bill 883 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. HB883 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, HB883 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.

HB 883 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, HB883 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.

HB 883 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 House Bill 883.