



Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 25, 2023

Bill: House Bill 961 – Public Schools - School Psychologist Recruitment Program

Position: Support

Dear Chairman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, 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.

School psychologists provide comprehensive psychological services to Maryland's students, including counseling, consultation and assessment. We are acutely aware of the significant mental health needs of many of our students, and we are dedicated to helping to address those needs in our schools. Yet many school psychologists work with very heavy caseloads, and are spread so thinly that they simply cannot help many of the students who need our support. And since there is a severe and increasing shortage of qualified school psychologists available to work in Maryland's public schools, we are facing an impending staffing crisis for our profession.

HB 961 will help to fend off this crisis by providing the Maryland State Department of Education with a mechanism for recruiting and supporting more school psychologists for our schools. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 961. 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