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**BILL:** Senate Bill 791  
**TITLE:** Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Job Duties  
**DATE:** March 29, 2023  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT  
**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supported Senate Bill 791, as introduced, toward the goal of including non-classroom teachers and other educators and education professionals within the scope of the significant salary increases and guaranteed minimum salaries provided by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

MABE has consistently supported efforts by the General Assembly to assist local school systems in addressing the critical shortages of not only highly qualified teachers but also other highly valued staff in every school 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 pandemic heightened public awareness regarding the severity of scope of the mental and behavioral health needs of students, and the lack of adequate professional staff to meet these needs. MABE therefore supported the intent of Senate Bill 791 to include these staff in the benefits of the Blueprint. In this way, the Blueprint can be even more effective to recruit high school and college students to pursue degrees in fields such as school counseling, school psychology, and school social work. In addition, educators providing direct services to students, but not as classroom teachers, can be compensated based on their respective national certifications on par with their colleagues as they work side-by-side in schools. In this light, MABE urges consideration of future state investments in short and long-term solutions to providing the wide array of professional resources our students deserve.

However, as amended, Senate bill 791 does continue to address one significant issue. The Blueprint includes the unsound and unworkable mandate for assistant principals to be classroom teachers 20% of their working time. MABE requests an amendment to ensure that assistant principals remain engaged with student learning, but not in the rigid manner proposed. Specifically, MABE requests that lines 5 through 8, on page 5, be replaced with “~~Teach in the classroom~~ PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES INVOLVING DIRECT INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS, INCLUDING CLASSROOM, SMALL GROUP, OR ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS, for at least 20% of their working hours.”

All local boards of education value the essential role of each educator and staff person who work for the public school system as the key to educating and meeting the needs of our student. 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 inappropriately excludes many highly valued educators, essential to student success, from the salary increases and other provisions of the Blueprint. In addition, as noted above, the Blueprint also mandates that assistant principals spend no less than 20% of their working time as teachers in classrooms. MABE supports the intent of the original provision of Senate Bill 791 to replace the reference to classroom instruction with classroom activities, but requests that school-based activities with students also be included.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 791 with the amendment provided above.