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CECIL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT SERVICES

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Written Testimony:

Senate Bill 0499 – State Department of Education – School Psychologist Recruitment Program

**Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senator Brian Feldman, Chair**

February 26, 2024

Jeffrey A. Lawson, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Cecil County Public Schools

Please be advised that on behalf of Cecil County Public Schools, I am requesting that Senate Bill 0499 – State Department of Education – School Psychologist Recruitment Program be given a favorable recommendation by the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee.

As Superintendent of Cecil County Public Schools, I am submitting this letter with the full support of our five Board of Education members. We strongly support Senate Bill 0499 State Department of Education – School Psychologist Recruitment Program, which is scheduled for a committee hearing on February 28, 2024.

The premise of this legislation is to provide support to school psychologists, with the goal of increasing the number of school psychologists available to serve in all Maryland public schools. We have experienced a critical shortage of school psychologist candidates in recent years. Like shortages in other related professions, the school psychologist shortage has the potential to significantly undermine the availability of high-quality services to students, families, and schools.

School psychologists are uniquely qualified members of school teams who support students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach. School psychologists apply expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior to help students succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. Additionally, they help teachers reach struggling students, improve classroom management skills, and utilize instructional strategies that will engage all types of learners.

Senate Bill 0499 is critical in addressing the school psychologist shortage experienced in all counties across Maryland. Professional development support, along with financial support, toward school psychologists' certification results in supporting every student in Maryland

For these reasons, the Cecil County Public Schools supports Senate Bill 0499 and **requests a favorable committee report.**