

SB0937-EEE_MACo_SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Brianna January

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 937

Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program - Established

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy and the Environment
and Judicial Proceedings Committees

Date: March 6, 2024

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 937. SB 937 establishes the Grow Your Own Educators Program to provide grants to local school systems to support noncertified employees in completing a teacher preparation program in anticipation of becoming fully certified.

Counties support this bill as one of a number of similar efforts to help ease the educator shortage and strengthen Maryland's school workforce and develop teaching into a high-quality profession as envisioned by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Additionally, "Grow Your Own" programs are a core centerpiece of the Maryland State Department of Education's strategic plan.

Teachers are leaving the profession at a concerning rate nationwide, and hiring new education staff remains a significant challenge, including in Maryland. Combined with the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, local education agencies (LEAs) are facing a perfect storm scenario around the country as teaching and support staff positions go unfilled.

The Grow Your Own Educators Program established by SB 937 would give LEAs grants to pay for prospective educators' tuition, school materials, and other education-related expenses if they pledge to teach full-time in high-needs schools, grades, or subject areas in Maryland. In addition to providing financial support, the program would also help provide critical professional development for teacher candidates, like mentorship opportunities. In particular, the program seeks to support existing employees of the public education system who do not yet have full teaching credentials in becoming fully certified to teach in Maryland public schools.

Counties, as critical stakeholders in Maryland's public education system and partners in supporting Maryland's schools, strongly support any State effort to get more qualified staff in classrooms, ease burdens on veteran staff, and strengthen the pipeline of prospective teachers. Doing so is imperative to the success of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future – which strongly emphasizes fortifying teaching as a high-quality profession – and to the success of Maryland students and the future workforce. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 937 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

SB0937_Grow_Your_Own_Educators_MLC_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0937
GROW YOUR OWN EDUCATORS GRANT PROGRAM - ESTABLISHED**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Augustine

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0937 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members are highly supportive of efforts made to reduce the teacher shortage in Maryland, particularly in high-needs schools. This bill, if enacted, would provide grants to individuals who are interested in pursuing a career in teaching and pledge to fulfill a service obligation as a teacher in a high-needs school, grade level, or content area where there is a shortage of teachers.

A local collaborative of school systems, unions, or higher education institution will make the determination of what content areas and needs exist and provide a plan for outreach to students that prioritizes both racial and linguistic diversity and estimates the cost, the length of the service obligation, and at least one source of long-term funding. They will also provide mentors and materials for the individuals selected.

This is a creative way to create a pipeline of teachers in the state that incentivizes local students. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB937_MSEA_Bost_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Cheryl Bost

Position: FAV

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 937
Grow Your Own Educators Program - Established

Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
March 6, 2024

Cheryl Bost
MSEA President

The Maryland State Education Association strongly supports Senate Bill 937, which would establish the Grow Your Own Educators Grant program, a program to support education support professionals such as paraprofessionals who wish to gain teacher certification through local pathways. The program would provide grants to eligible collaboratives of local education agencies, institutions of higher education, and educators' unions. It would also establish requirements and best practices for the implementation and funding of Grow Your Own pathways.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Maryland continues to face educator shortages, high rates of teacher attrition, and a teaching workforce that is less racially and linguistically diverse than Maryland's students. Shortages are especially pronounced in areas such as special education, early childhood and elementary education, and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Last year, the Educator Shortage Reduction Act made great strides toward addressing these issues. However, one key element of the original bill, a \$5 million Grow Your Own Educators program, was amended out of the bill before it passed.

Federal ESSER funds expire this year, which means that local programs to develop teachers may not be able to continue. This is the time for Maryland to create a long-term Grow Your Own program that supports education support



professionals who wish to become classroom teachers. The Accountability and Implementation Board has identified this type of workforce development program as a tool to achieving the Blueprint's goal of a high-quality and diverse teacher workforce.

Studies suggest that education support professionals who become teachers are more effective and more likely to remain in the classroom than teachers prepared through other pathways. Maryland's education support professional workforce also better reflects the racial diversity of our students and communities than the current teaching workforce. Supporting education support professionals who are interested in becoming teachers will help Maryland meet our goal of diversifying the profession and may also improve teacher retention.

All education support professionals are essential and deserve a living wage whether or not they wish to become teachers. But those who do wish to become teachers should have the opportunity to do so without taking on debt or losing their job and benefits while they study. Education support professionals are already committed educators who work with students every day, and they are well positioned to continue that work in teaching roles if they choose to do so.

Importantly, this program in this bill is not intended to rely on state funding alone. The grant requirements would direct collaboratives to identify long-term funding sources such as federal funds for apprenticeships and high-need content areas. Passing this bill would codify best practices for Grow Your Own programs and support collaboratives in accessing creative funding sources to sustain these innovative, research-backed programs.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 937.

SEIU Local 500 Testimony SB 937 - Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Christopher Cano

Position: FAV

Testimony - SB 937 - Grow Your Own Educators Grant - Favorable
Senate EEE Committee
March 6, 2024
Christopher C. Cano, MPA
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate EEE Committee:

We at SEIU Local 500 represent over 20,000 members who teach Marylanders from their early childhoods to their careers and beyond. Many of our members are educational support professionals serving as paraeducators in Montgomery County public schools. Often these members serve vital roles in students' education and many seek professional growth within the classroom.

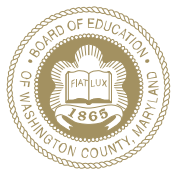
SB 937 by establishing a grant program for school systems to ensure educational support professionals transition to full-time teachers without a loss of income while they are focusing on their studies is vital to meeting the goals of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The facts are simple, we need more teachers and we simply do not have enough college-bound high school graduates majoring in teaching right now. What we do have in Maryland is an existing workforce of professionals who already serve in an educational setting interacting and helping students everyday. Being able to meet the lofty goals set forward by the Blueprint means utilizing every available resource including helping paraeducators become teachers.

We ask for your favorable report on SB 937 as it has our full support and we know it will go a long way towards shaping Maryland's educational future.

SB 937 support WCBOE 3-6-24.pdf

Uploaded by: Jamie Brown

Position: FAV



BILL: Senate Bill 937/House Bill 1157
TITLE: Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program – Established
HEARING DATE: March 6, 2024 / February 21, 2024
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment / House Ways and Means
CONTACT: Mr. Steve Edwards, Deputy Communications Officer (301-766-8914)

The Washington County Board of Education supports Senate Bill 937, which would establish the Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program to provide grants to local school systems for employees who pledge to fulfill a certain service obligation as a full-time teacher in Maryland.

Attracting highly-qualified teachers is one of the most significant challenges facing Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) as well as school districts across Maryland and the nation. Providing funding to support a Grow Your Own Program, as outlined in the legislation, presents another unique opportunity to the state’s non-certificated education support professionals.

Consideration should also be given to expanding this opportunity to conditionally-certificated teachers as well. WCPS currently has 78 conditionally-certificated teachers, many of whom could benefit from a program such as the one proposed in this legislation. Both non-certificated education support professionals and conditionally-certificated teachers are already serving students across the state with many aspiring to become certificated teachers. While there are similar grant programs available, expanding the scope and providing non-certificated education support professionals and conditionally-certificated teachers with the opportunity to earn their teaching credentials at no cost to themselves while continuing to be paid and offered benefits represents a wise investment that will ultimately result in a larger pool of qualified, committed educators to serve in high-needs schools or teach content areas in which there is a shortage of teachers.

In Washington County, the number of new teachers hired over the past eight years has slowly but steadily increased from 125 in 2015-2016 to 239 in 2022-2023. While those figures are significant, the number of teaching positions that have remained vacant each year due to the teacher shortage is also notable.

WCPS has experienced success in developing teachers through the Maryland Accelerates Teacher-Leader Residency Program at Frostburg State University. In the 2022-2023 school year, 13 participants from the program were hired to teach in WCPS and there are another 9 who will likely seek employment with WCPS this year. With the expiration of the temporary federal funds that have helped to support this program on the horizon, additional financial support for grow your own programs needs to be established. As exemplified by Maryland Accelerates, these programs have proven to be a successful means of increasing the pool of qualified teachers and helping to ensure their success inside the classroom through a combination of education and mentorships with experienced educators.

Establishing a Grow Your Own Program, as outlined in the bill, is an attractive means of helping to address the teacher shortage in Maryland, promoting greater diversity within the teaching profession, and most importantly, ensuring students have highly qualified, committed teachers in their classrooms each day.

The Washington County Board of Education respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 937.

Thank you.

Cc: Washington County Board of Education Members
Washington County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly
Dr. David T. Sovine, Superintendent
Dr. Jennifer Webster, Associate Superintendent for Administration and Leadership
Dr. Garry Willow, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Jeffrey Proulx, Chief Operating Officer
Ms. Ilissa Ramm, Chief Legal Counsel
Mr. John Woolums, Director of Governmental Relations, Maryland Association of Boards of Education
Ms. Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland

SB 937.Grow Your Own Teacher Aide to Teacher Pipel

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FAV

BILL: Senate Bill 937
TITLE: Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program - Established
DATE: March 6, 2024
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Judicial Proceedings
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports Senate Bill 937 to establish the Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program to facilitate the development of licensed classroom teachers from the ranks of educational support professionals, or paraeducators, already experienced and dedicated to student learning in classrooms across the State.

All local boards of education value the essential role of the educators and staff persons who work for the public school system as the keys to educating and meeting the needs of our students. Therefore, MABE has consistently supported efforts by the General Assembly to assist local school systems in addressing the critical shortages of highly qualified teachers, principals, and other staff in every school and the classrooms of all students 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.

In the 2023 legislative session, MABE supported several bills, including the Governor's Educator Shortage Reduction Act (HB 1219, Ch. 627), which became law and includes major initiatives to expand the alternative teacher certification program to include educators in prekindergarten programs, create a new Maryland Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Diversity Dashboard, reform the Teachers Fellows for Maryland scholarship program. MABE believes that passing Senate Bill 937 will significantly advance the work already underway to expand the scope of educational pathways for our education support staff to become highly qualified teachers.

MABE is generally supportive of the state taking bold, innovative steps to build Maryland's teacher pipeline and workforce. Senate Bill 937, by creating a new Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), would meaningfully enhance state efforts to promote the profession of teaching as a career path for many more talented Marylanders who may not be aware of the rapidly improving compensation and working conditions under the Blueprint, and who would benefit for the opportunity for advancement created through this new program.

Local boards firmly believe that the role of a full complement of qualified staff, including large numbers of new teachers, will be pivotal to the successful implementation of Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The Blueprint features major expansions of full-day prekindergarten, student behavioral health services, college readiness courses, and career and technical education programs. Passage of Senate Bill 937 will certainly advance the statewide effort to recruit, educate, and retain the professional educators essential to meet these objectives.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 937.

Augustine - SB937- Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Malcolm Augustine

Position: FAV

MALCOLM AUGUSTINE
Legislative District 47
Prince George's County

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Executive Nominations Committee

Education, Energy and the
Environment Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 5, 2024

Senate Bill 937 - Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program – Established

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present **Senate Bill 937 - Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program – Established**, a legislative endeavor poised to establish a grant program aimed at fortifying and diversifying our state's teaching workforce. As we are all acutely aware, the shortage of teachers in our state is a pressing concern that transcends mere numerical insufficiency. It extends into a crisis of teacher retention and a teaching workforce that inadequately mirrors the rich racial diversity and multilingual composition of Maryland's student body.

Extensive research underscores the incontrovertible benefits derived by all students when exposed to a diverse array of educators. Notably, studies indicate that Black and Hispanic students, instructed by educators of the same racial or ethnic background, exhibit enhanced academic outcomes and improved attendance. The gravity of the educator shortage is familiar to this committee, as evidenced by the passage of House Bill 1219, the Maryland Educator Shortage Reduction Act, during the preceding year, a legislative action endorsed by Governor Moore's administration.

The bill under consideration today revisits and expands upon a program embedded in the initial version of the Educator Shortage Reduction Act, subsequently omitted before its final enactment—the Grow Your Own Educators Program. Grow Your Own initiatives epitomize investments made by states and counties in cultivating the local educator workforce, often manifested through certification programs or apprenticeships. The initial iteration of this program, within last year's bill, specifically targeted education support professionals, such as paraeducators, aspiring to attain teacher certification.

These candidates, through the program, have the opportunity to earn a teaching degree and certificate, committing in return to serve within the school system for a stipulated duration. Unfortunately, the Grow Your Own Educators program did not feature in the final version of the Educator Shortage Reduction Act last year, partly attributable to the presence of federal ESSER funding supporting short-term, county-level Grow Your Own programs—a funding stream set to expire in September of the current year, necessitating the establishment of a permanent program.

MALCOLM AUGUSTINE
Legislative District 47
Prince George's County

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Executive Nominations Committee

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Acknowledging the promising potential of Grow Your Own programs, the U.S. Department of Education, MSDE, and the AIB have advocated for their implementation as effective strategies to recruit high-quality and diverse teachers. The deliberate focus on education support professionals in this program stems from the understanding that not every individual in this category aspires to become a teacher, nor should such an aspiration be deemed obligatory.

Research corroborates that education support professionals acquiring teacher certification exhibit a higher likelihood of persisting as classroom teachers compared to those prepared through alternative pathways. Additionally, they demonstrate greater efficacy in enhancing students' test scores in reading and math, surpassing teachers without prior classroom experience.

This effectiveness can be attributed to the pre-existing experience of education support professionals in working with students within their local school community, affording them familiarity with the daily rigors of the classroom environment before undertaking a teacher certification program. In Maryland and across the U.S., education support professionals are more likely to be individuals of color and possess multilingual capabilities compared to certificated educators.

Establishing pathways to certification for interested education support professionals is imperative in constructing a teaching workforce reflective of the diversity inherent in Maryland's student populace. Exemplifying the success of these initiatives, consider the paraeducator-to-teacher Grow Your Own program in Georgia, where 85% of program participants were Black, in stark contrast to the College of Education's overall enrollment, which stood at a mere 16% Black.

Furthermore, more than 92% of program graduates from Georgia went on to serve in low-income schools, boasting an incredible 95% retention rate over a decade. Another exemplary case is Tennessee, the first state to transform such a program into a federally registered apprenticeship, thereby establishing a sustainable source of federal funding. This Tennessee program has earned national acclaim, praised by U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and former U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh.

The success of Tennessee's program underscores that direct state funding is not the sole route to successful Grow Your Own initiatives. Instead, the most prosperous programs leverage creative federal and state funding sources, including apprenticeship and workforce development funds, Pell grants, and education funds earmarked for addressing shortage areas.

MALCOLM AUGUSTINE
Legislative District 47
Prince George's County

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Executive Nominations Committee

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

In Maryland, we observe the emergence of developing Grow Your Own models. Washington County Public Schools, utilizing temporary federal ESSER funds, recently collaborated with Frostburg State University's Maryland Accelerates Program—a one-year teacher certification program—encouraging education support professionals to apply. Today, you will hear from Sheila Jones Wagner, a 6th-grade teacher and alumna of the Paraeducators' Pathways to Culturally Responsive Teaching Program—an exemplary Grow Your Own model spearheaded by a collaborative of Bowie State University, the Howard County Education Association, and Howard County Public Schools.

The grant program, as delineated in Senate Bill 937, designates MSDE for its administration. Collaboratives comprising LEAs, institutions of higher education, and educators' unions are eligible to petition for grant funding, with a focus on instituting or perpetuating Grow Your Own programs targeting critical shortage areas, such as special education and early childhood education.

This program strategically incorporates best practices from successful initiatives, emphasizing sustainable funding sources, equity in recruitment, meaningful support for program participants, and accountability in tracking results. A noteworthy aspect is the mandate for collaboratives seeking grant funds to identify long-term funding sources, including apprenticeship and workforce funds.

Grow Your Own Educator Programs stand as proven strategies for cultivating a robust pipeline of future educators and recruiting a cadre of diverse, high-quality teachers committed to long-term service to our students. Senate Bill 937 enjoys support from a diverse array of education stakeholders.

Senate Bill 937 is poised to address teacher shortages, mitigate high rates of teacher attrition, and rectify the lack of diversity among educators, all while fostering improved student academic outcomes.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I urge the committee to give a **favorable** report for **Senate Bill 937 - Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program – Established**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Malcolm Augustine".

Senator Malcolm Augustine

SB 937 - Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program - E

Uploaded by: Mary Pat Fannon

Position: FAV



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
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BILL: SB 937
TITLE: Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program - Established
DATE: March 6, 2024
POSITION: Favorable
COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four Maryland local school superintendents, **supports** Senate Bill 937.

This bill establishes the Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program to provide grants to local school systems for employees who pledge to fulfill a certain service obligation as a full-time teacher in the State; requiring the State Department of Education to administer the Program and to take certain actions to develop and implement the Program; establishing the eligibility for certain teacher candidates in the Program and requiring teacher candidates to be paid a certain rate and offered certain benefits under the Program; etc.

Local superintendents support the General Assembly's assistance and efforts to address the critical shortages of qualified teachers and school personnel. The teacher shortage in Maryland is well-documented and dire. According to the MSDE 2022-2023 First Day of School Vacancy Data Collection, there were 2,572 total vacancies, with the highest number in special education (581); these vacancies vary significantly across LEAs due to local recruitment and retention efforts. Additionally, enrollment in teacher preparation programs has increased since 2017 but is still 2,300 enrollees short of the 2012 levels (Source: Title II Annual Teacher Preparation State Report). More alarmingly, teacher attrition has increased from 9.1% in 2014 to 11.2% in 2023, representing over 7,000 educators who did not return to teaching in the 22/23 school year. Lastly, the issuance of conditionally certificated teachers has increased by 136% over the last five years (MSDE - Updates on the Maryland Educator Workforce; 9-12-23 before the Senate Ways and Means Committee).

Currently, twenty-three local school systems are administering very successful Grow Your Own programs with the potential to yield more than 300 teachers, 100 new paraprofessionals, and support more than 400 conditionally certificate teachers to pass license exams. PSSAM believes SB 937's grant program for non-certificated personnel to attend school to gain the credentials to become certificated teachers in teacher shortage areas. This program will aid existing efforts to strengthen the teacher pipeline and serve as a key resource for recruiting and supporting a more diverse workforce. This legislation will also help support and highlight the benefits of teaching in the context of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future that promises increased starting salaries, clear pathways for upward mobility, and leadership growth.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 937 and requests a **favorable** report.

BTU Testimony Support SB0937 GYO.pdf

Uploaded by: Nathan Ferrell

Position: FAV



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Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 937
Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program - Established
Education, Energy, and the Environment
March 6, 2024
1:00pm

The Baltimore Teachers Union supports Senate Bill 0937, and would like to express our strong support for the proposed legislation that aims to establish a Grow Your Own Program, providing financial support and mentoring to paraprofessionals and school-related personnel who aspire to become certified teachers.

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, represents over 1.7 million educators, healthcare workers, and public employees in the United States and its territories.

We commend the committee for addressing the critical issue of teacher shortages and recognizing the potential of paraprofessionals and school-related personnel to address this challenge through the Grow Your Own Program. Investing in the development of our dedicated education support professionals is an essential step towards ensuring a highly qualified and diverse teaching workforce for our students. In our educational system, we face numerous challenges, including a shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in underserved communities. Paraprofessionals and school-related personnel are often deeply rooted in their communities, possess invaluable experience, and understand the unique needs of the students they serve. However, barriers such as financial constraints and limited access to necessary support services hinder their transition to becoming certified teachers.

The proposed Grow Your Own Program offers a comprehensive solution to these challenges by providing financial assistance and essential support services to those who wish to pursue teacher certification. This program not only addresses the shortage of qualified educators but also fosters diversity within the teaching profession, as it encourages individuals from underrepresented groups to pursue teaching careers

- Scholarships and tuition assistance will make teacher certification programs more accessible to paraprofessionals and school-related personnel.
- Mentorship programs will connect aspiring educators with experienced teachers for guidance and support.
- Professional development opportunities will enhance their skills and prepare them for the challenges of the classroom.

- Access to counseling and academic advising services will ensure a smooth transition into the teaching profession.

We have seen success stories from similar programs implemented in other states, where paraprofessionals and school-related personnel have not only successfully obtained their teaching certifications but have also become effective and impactful educators. The Grow Your Own Program is a proven strategy to recruit, prepare, and retain high-quality teachers who are committed to their communities..

In conclusion, **the Baltimore Teachers Union strongly urges the committee to pass a favorable report on SB0937.** By investing in the professional growth of paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, we not only address the teacher shortage crisis but also contribute to the overall improvement of our education system.

Thank you for your time and dedication to the betterment of our education system. We are confident that the implementation of the Grow Your Own Program will have a lasting positive impact on our schools, students, and communities.



Testimony in support of SB0937.pdf

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

3/06/2024

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0937 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program - Established

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0937, Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program - Established

I am proud to support this bill as part of Governor Moore’s emphasis on service. “Currently, every [school district plan](#) notes that help is needed to recruit, hire and retain teachers in all levels of special education, that there’s a lack of certified or qualified teacher applicants and a limited number of college graduates entering the teaching profession.”

This bill is a tool Maryland can and should implement to help alleviate this shortage by assisting students who can be offered the opportunity to enter the education field as a career. It can serve to widen the pool of possible future educators by supporting students who choose to pursue educational opportunities and become the instructors that Maryland desperately needs. In exchange for financial assistance to become teachers the person commits to using that education to serve Maryland students. It provides compensation opportunities to earn while you learn including benefits that further increase the value of participation in the program.

The importance of finding the numbers of teachers we need now and, in the future, will help us meet some of the goals of the Blueprint for Education. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0937.**

MEC-SB0937 - Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program

Uploaded by: Rick Tyler, Jr.-Chair

Position: FAV



Maryland Education Coalition



Ellie Mitchell & Rick Tyler, Jr. – Co-Chairs

Web site - www.marylandeducationcoalition.org

Email – md.education.coalition@gmail.com

March 6, 2024

SB937 - Establishing the Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
POSITION – SUPPORT

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) advocates for adequate, equitable policies, funding, and transparent accountability statewide for the estimated 900,000 students in Maryland’s public schools, regardless of their academic, cultural, economic, geographic, racial, or other demographic status. **We work to ensure that Maryland provides all public school students “a thorough and efficient System of Free Public Schools; and shall provide by taxation, or otherwise, for their maintenance” as defined in the Maryland Constitution**, so all students are prepared to graduate college or career ready as defined in state and federal law. We believe this is their civil right.

According to a MSDE report (July 2022) –“[Maryland’s Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity](#)”, approximately 50% of Maryland certification applicants yearly are prepared in another state! In contrast, a study by [Educators Rising](#)” with an affiliate at Towson University, found that almost 60% of teachers nationally teach where they went to school. MEC believes that Maryland along with our higher education community can do better.

MEC supports SB937, which would “Establishing the Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program to provide grants to local school systems for employees who pledge to fulfill a certain service obligation as a full-time teacher in the State; requiring the State Department of Education to administer the Program and to take certain actions to develop and implement the Program; establishing the eligibility for certain teacher candidates in the Program and requiring teacher candidates to be paid a certain rate and offered certain benefits under the Program”.

MEC also notes that during July 2022, the Maryland State Department of Education published the following report – “[Maryland’s Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity](#)”. This report documents and supports many of the issues that can be found within SB 937 including vacancies by local school system, attrition rates and Vacancies by Certification Area (page 16), which shows **that there were over 1,922 vacancies of certified educators in 2022!** *Below you will find the top vacancies by certification area and critical need.*

Certification Area	Vacancies
Special Education Generic: birth-adult	402.7
Elementary Education (1-6)	254
Speech/Language Pathologist	117.1
Mathematics (7-12)	111

Certification Area	Vacancies
Early Childhood (PreK-3)	104
School Counselors	96.5
ESOL (PreK-12)	82.8
English (7-12)	82

MEC is concerned with these numbers and believes that Maryland needs to recruit, train, place and retain more educators from Maryland in our public schools, where they grew up and went to school. They are more likely to relate to and gain the respect of students, so they come to school ready to learn more successfully with fewer behavior problems. They also come to work more prepared to understand and address cultural, personal challenges and community challenges. This is needed more now than ever before.

Therefore, MEC urges that committee to issue a favorable report on SB937- Establishing the Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program and hopes that all understand the urgency of passing this bill.

ACLU of MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Arts Every Day, Attendance Works, CASA, Children’s Behavioral Health Coalition, Free State PTA, Decoding Dyslexia of Maryland, Disability Rights Maryland, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Ed, Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition, MSC-NAACP, Maryland Out of School Time Network, Maryland School Psychologists’ Association, Parent Advocacy Consortium, Public Justice Center, School Social Workers of MD, Strong Schools Maryland, Kalman R. Hettleman, David Hornbeck, Rick Tyler, Jr., Sharon Rubinstein

SB 937 SEIU Local 500 testimony on Grow Your Own M

Uploaded by: Sally Murek

Position: FAV

SB 937 Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program – Favorable

Good afternoon Senator Feldman and committee members,

I'm Sally Murek, the Paraeducator Program Manager for Montgomery County Public Schools and a vice-president representing paraeducators on the executive Board of **SEIU Local 500** which represents over 20,000 members serving Marylanders from cradle to career.

I'm here today to speak favorably in support of the passage of **SB 937, Grow Your Own Educators.**

Our schools are full of committed, skilled educational support professionals who desire to grow their careers and become certificated teachers, but obstacles remain.

As has often been shared, a paraeducator working 7 hours a day, 10 months a year is fortunate to earn about \$30,000 a year. Financially, pursuing a teacher certification is beyond the reach of many. Yet along with financial support, they also need social emotional support and mentorship. The educational support professional work force is more racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse than the current teacher cadre and many need "people" support along the way.

SB 937 can help to overcome some of these barriers. It can provide not only the financial support needed to pursue higher education certification, but also the mentorship and personal support to earn certification.

Research indicates that education support professionals who attain teacher certification are more likely to:

- remain in the classroom than teachers prepared through other pathways,
- to reflect the racial and linguistic diversity of the students they serve,

- are more effective at improving student test scores in reading and math,
- are more likely to remain in teaching compared to teachers who did not have prior classroom experience.

Providing pathways to certification for interested education support professionals is a promising strategy toward a teaching workforce that better reflects the diversity of Maryland's students.

We must also remember that:

- All education support professional roles are critical to a school's success and daily functioning and should not be viewed as "stepping stones" to certificated roles. All education support professionals deserve a living wage regardless of their interest in becoming a teacher.
- Grow Your Own programs often require a commitment for participants to teach locally for a certain number of years upon graduation, though policies may also include caveats for those who are unable to complete the program or find a job.
- The development of diverse and highly qualified mentor teachers is an important element of successful Grow Your Own programs, and LEAs should consider how their Career Ladder can help develop mentor teachers to support GYO efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of SB 937 and I ask for your favorable consideration of this legislation.

SB0937 Howard Co BOE Testimony 030624 for EEE - Gr

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: FAV



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House Senate,
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 6, 2024**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

Jennifer Swickard Mallo, *Chair*

Yun Lu, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*

Linfeng Chen, Ph.D.

Jacky McCoy

Jolene Mosley

Robyn C. Scates, Esq.

Antonia Watts

Lamia Ayaz
Student Member

William J. Barnes
*Acting Superintendent,
Secretary/Treasurer*

SB0937: FAVORABLE

Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program – Established

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **SB0937 Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program – Established Services** as an avenue to addressing current teacher shortages.

SB0937 establishes the Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program for local school systems that want to create collaboratives to support non-certificated education support professionals who are interested in pursuing a career in teaching and who pledge to be a full-time teacher in a high-needs school, grade level, or content areas which has a shortage of teachers as identified by the Maryland State Department of Education. In order to receive funds, collaboratives must include partnerships among: at least one school system; at least one local school system union; and at least one institution of higher education with an approved teacher preparation program. The collaborative must negotiate a plan to select the specific content area the grant will support, select a teacher preparation program, and select an individual to provide support and program guidance. The collaborative will also determine the billing agreement with the institution of higher education, and develop an outreach plan. Funding can be used for tuition, books, and fees for teacher candidates, stipends for mentor teachers required under the program, and costs associated with the administration of the program.

In addressing the decline in available teaching staff and the need for additional teachers to support the goals of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, SB0937 is in line with the Board's legislative priority to support efforts that would expand grow your own and similar measures that incentivize teachers to work locally in Maryland and/or Howard County. Internally, over the past several years, the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) has been aggressively targeting our current support staff to identify potential teaching candidates.

Through partnerships with Towson and Bowie State Universities, and supported by state-funded Teacher Collaborative Grants, HCPSS has had approximately 50 support staff who either earned their undergraduate or graduate degrees and teaching certificates. Through Maryland Leads, in order to diversify and increase the numbers of potential staff, Howard County is further enhancing and solidifying the Grow Your Own options being explored. Cohorts of Howard County students will participate in and complete the Teacher Academy Maryland and apprenticeships in HCPSS elementary schools as paraeducators. Additional funding to increase these pathways, whether in Howard County or through other school systems, would continue to grow the pool of available teacher candidates.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report of SB0937 from this Committee.

03.01.24 LOS SB 0937 Joint.pdf

Uploaded by: Terry Hale

Position: FAV

Danielle Hornberger
County Executive

Steven Overbay
Director of Administration

Office: 410.996.5202
Email: dhornberger@ccgov.org



Jackie Gregory
Council President

Robert Meffley
Vice President

Office: 410.996.5201
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CECIL COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Cecil County Administration Building
200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Elkton, MD 21921

March 1, 2024

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 0937 – Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program - Established
Letter of Support

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

The County Council and the County Executive of Cecil County unanimously support SB 0937 - Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program – Established. The Hearing on this legislation is scheduled on March 6, 2024.

It is our understanding that this legislation is establishing the Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program to provide grants to local school systems for employees who pledge to fulfill a certain service obligation as a full-time teacher in the State; requiring the State Department of Education to administer the Program and to take certain actions to develop and implement the Program; establishing the eligibility for certain teacher candidates in the Program and requiring teacher candidates to be paid a certain rate and offered certain benefits under the Program and so forth.

Cecil County is very concerned about the number of future educators needed in Maryland and this program will help aid in the recruitment of educators. Cecil County supports this legislation.

The County Executive and County Council of Cecil County respectfully request that the Education, Energy and Environment Committee send a favorable report on SB 0937.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Hornberger".

Danielle Hornberger
County Executive

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jackie Gregory".

Jackie Gregory
President of County Council

MANSEF Testimony 2024 - SB 937- Support with Amend

Uploaded by: Dorie Flynn

Position: FWA



BILL: Senate Bill 937
TITLE: Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program – Established
DATE: March 6, 2024
POSITION: Support with Amendment
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment and Judicial Proceedings
CONTACT: Dorie Flynn – Executive Director

The Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities (MANSEF) supports Senate Bill 937 *with an amendment* to include publicly funded special education schools in the establishment of the Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program to support the development of licensed classroom teachers from our existing teaching assistants and paraeducators, who already have experience in the classroom, and have a desire to become fully licensed teachers.

The MANSEF schools are currently serving over 3500 publicly funded special needs students. These students belong to and are counted in the local education agency student counts. Our partnership with the local education agencies (LEAs) to serve special needs students is grounded in the basic tenets of IDEA to have a full continuum of educational options. We all have a shared goal to ensure that students are taught by qualified and passionate individuals. Last year, MSDE provided over \$150 million to LEAs through the Maryland LEADS grant which incorporated a Grow Your Own Program (see fiscal and policy note prepared by DLS.) However, the MANSEF schools were not included nor were they offered such opportunities.

There is no justification to exclude the publicly funded special needs schools as they are highly regulated and monitored by MSDE. Our teachers and staff must be licensed just like our public school counterparts and yet, substitute teachers in public schools are not required to have bachelor's degree as they are in the nonpublic special education schools. The State should be supporting our programs as they have oversight and responsibility for our students. By incorporating language into the bill to include publicly funded nonpublic special education schools, you will validate your commitment to serving our most challenged students and champion the cause to include our most dedicated staff.

This amendment would greatly benefit our 70 member schools, ensuring that we receive the necessary acknowledgement and resources to further enhance the educational experience for our students and support the professional development of our dedicated staff. Our paraprofessionals should have the same opportunities as others to further their career options and become teachers.

Therefore, we respectfully request your consideration to **amend the language of SB937 to include publicly funded nonpublic special education schools** as we serve publicly funded students.

SB0937 Grow Your Own Program.pdf

Uploaded by: sharlimar douglass

Position: FWA



March 3, 2024

**The Honorable Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
The Honorable Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

RE: Support for SB0937 Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program – Established with Amendment

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, Committee Member, and Bill Sponsor,

The Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE), a coalition of education advocacy, civil rights, and community-based organizations committed to eliminating racial disparities in Maryland's education system, is pleased to submit favorable testimony in support of SB0937 with an amendment as introduced by Senator Augustine.

Grow Your Own is a teacher preparation strategy focused on developing teachers from the local community. This might mean offering paraprofessionals, teaching assistants, high school students and career changers an opportunity to become a certified educator and ensuring novice teachers have the supportive training they need to stay for the long term. Grow Your Own Programs have proven effective at targeting specific populations to the teaching profession and to retaining candidates. Ensuring that the State Department of Education has adequate funding for a GYO Educators Grant Program will allow for Maryland to grow and develop a strong teacher force here in Maryland with Marylanders.

We ask that SB0937 be amended to include conditionally certificated teachers. Currently the state of Maryland employs 5,304 teachers. Four of the biggest school districts are dependent upon the high number of candidates hired on a conditional certificate to fill teaching positions. However, there is no statewide structure in place to prepare, develop and retain the conditional teacher. For four years i contracted with one of these school districts to create a system of guidance, to provide critical and timely information along with transparency, to enroll them in a Maryland Approved Teacher Preparation Program for teacher candidates hired on a conditional certificate. Over these, i found that too often conditionally certificated teachers did not understand the immense responsibility in

becoming a professionally certified educator (i.e. the time commitment, returning to college, the high cost of returning to school) financially, emotionally, mentally, and physically.

Including conditional teachers will increase the number of conditional teachers who realize professional certification and eliminate the financial burden faced by many. It will also be another measure to ensure that Maryland teachers are receiving all the preparation they should have as educators. And will retain educators. These educators are committed to profession despite the challenges. **We urge you to support and amend SB0937 to include conditional certificated teachers.**

peace and truth,
sharlimar douglass
Chair

The Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE)

SB 937 - State Board - SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Zachary Hands

Position: FWA

TO: Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

BILL: Senate Bill (SB) 937 - Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program – Established

DATE: March 6, 2024

POSITION: Support with Amendments

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) extend their support for **Senate Bill (SB) 937 – Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program – Established**, with amendments. MSDE and the State Board are dedicated to supporting the expansion of Grow Your Own teacher preparation programs that allow individuals who have already committed to Maryland’s children and families to earn an income while they prepare for teacher licensure.

MSDE and the State Board believe that in addition to supporting noncertified education support professionals through teacher preparation, it is critical to also support conditionally licensed teachers. On October 15, 2023, there were 5,304 conditionally licensed teachers employed in local education agencies (LEAs) across the State making up 8.39% of the teacher workforce. Every Maryland LEA employs at least four conditionally licensed teachers and ¼ of LEAs staff over 10% of their teaching positions with conditionally licensed teachers. The table below includes the total number of teachers, number of conditional teachers, and percentage of conditional teachers for each Maryland LEA:

Local Education Agency	Total Teachers	Conditional Teachers	Percent Conditional Teachers
Allegany	625	4	0.64
Anne Arundel	6,128	581	9.48
Baltimore City	5,153	697	13.53
Baltimore	7,555	610	8.07
Calvert	990	28	2.83
Caroline	418	15	3.59
Carroll	1,880	108	5.74
Cecil	1,110	52	4.68
Charles	1,839	353	19.20

Local Education Agency	Total Teachers	Conditional Teachers	Percent Conditional Teachers
Dorchester	359	46	12.81
Frederick	3,086	206	6.68
Garrett	298	6	2.01
Harford	2,684	114	4.25
Howard	4,354	163	3.74
Kent	161	10	6.21
Montgomery	11,966	664	5.55
Prince George's	8,958	1,342	14.98
Queen Anne's	529	22	4.16
St. Mary's	1,103	98	8.88
SEED School	40	8	20.00
Somerset	252	31	12.30
Talbot	339	23	6.78
Washington	1,569	39	2.49
Wicomico	1,217	79	6.49
Worcester	606	5	0.83
State Total	63,219	5,304	8.39

The number of conditionally licensed teachers employed in Maryland LEAs has increased 251% since 2018. In the fall of 2023, conditionally licensed teachers made up the largest pathway to teaching and are often the most under-supported. Of critical importance is the fact that conditionally licensed teachers are significantly more diverse than traditionally prepared teachers and more closely mirror Maryland's student population.

With this in mind, we request an amendment to SB 937 that allows conditionally licensed teachers to also participate in the Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program as they pursue teacher licensure.

MSDE and the State Board respectfully request that the committee consider this information as you deliberate on **SB 937**. Please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne, Executive Director of Government Affairs, Education Policy, and Government Relations, at Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov or at 410-767-0504 or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov or at 443-915-6094, if you would like any additional information.