



February 26, 2024

The Honorable Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
The Honorable Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair
House Ways and Means Committee

RE: Support for HB0945 (Education – Initial Teacher Certification – Requirements) with Amendments

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, Committee Members, and Bill Sponsors,

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 HB0945 as introduced by Delegate Ebersole and co-sponsors.

MAREE supports the intent of HB0945 to provide more pathways for people entering the teaching profession and reducing barriers to the teaching profession.

- MAREE supports and agrees with repealing a provision of law that requires a teacher preparation program to require a student to pass a certain assessment (edTPA or PPAT) as a graduation requirement. All Maryland colleges and universities should be required to graduate a student seeking a degree in an area of teaching if the student has successfully completed all courses and student teaching. This will allow the individual to be eligible for a teaching position to be placed on a conditional certificate and begin teaching in the area for which they earned their degree. The educator can teach while they seek to pass the edTPA or complete In-District Training Program.
- To that point MAREE recommends that there be an additional option for teacher candidates to demonstrate Basic Teaching Competency. Having only one option (edTPA or PPAT) for demonstrating Basic Teaching Competency is a barrier to growing a diverse teacher workforce. We suggest completion of the In-District Training Program. Also, to this end the Interstate Teacher Compact should be adopted by Maryland so that out of state candidates have more than one pathway to certification.
- Additionally, MAREE recommends teacher candidates have two options for demonstrating Basic Skills Knowledge. They pass a basic skills assessment for reading and writing or present a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 on the most recently earned degree.

None of the proposed amendments weaken the qualifications for one to be deemed a highly qualified teacher. Instead, we acknowledge that there is more than one way to assess skills,

competency and knowledge. Providing more than one option will increase the number of candidates who are most qualified to be in Maryland classrooms.

For these reasons, MAREE urges a favorable report for HB0945 Education – Initial Teacher Certification – Requirements

peace and truth,
sharlimar douglass

Chair

Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education