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of Howard County**

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**Board of Education of Howard County  
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,  
Ways and Means Committee  
March 27, 2024**

**SB0084: FAVORABLE  
Teacher Degree Apprenticeship**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **SB0084 Teacher Degree Apprenticeship** as an avenue to addressing current teacher shortages.

As authorizing legislation, SB0084 allows the Maryland Department of Labor to provide grants to facilitate the development of additional pathways to teaching. The purpose of the grant program is to: (1) provide high school and college students as well as career changers opportunities to begin a career in education in Maryland; (2) develop a cohort of individuals qualified to work as paraeducators and teachers in the state; and (3) encourage county boards of education to hire apprentices.

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, SB0084 would be in line with the Board's platform on using varied recruitment and retention efforts to maintain a highly qualified staff. 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 apprenticeship opportunities funded at the state level, 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 SB0084 from this Committee.