

FAVORABLE
House Bill 945
Education – Initial Teacher Certification – Requirements

House Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association strongly supports House Bill 945, which would expand pathways to teacher licensure for aspiring educators by allowing candidates who pass a subject-specific exam to select from several other entrance criteria, including a portfolio-based assessment, a 3.0 GPA, a basic skills assessment, or a rigorous 3-year induction program that would be available to conditionally certificated educators seeking full certification.

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).

To address record shortages and insufficient pipeline of educators, we must establish new pathways to teacher certification, which will also help to diversify the profession and meet the Blueprint for Maryland's Future goals for a highly qualified and diverse workforce. Currently, even after completing a Maryland educator preparation program, a teacher must pass multiple certification tests that do not fully capture their potential impact, just as standardized tests are not reliable indicators of a student's academic promise.

Teacher certification exams have not been proven to strongly predict teacher effectiveness, and racial disparities in certification exam pass rates also suggest there is bias in the tests themselves.¹ A report on the Praxis I licensure exam showed that Black test takers received scores lower than their white counterparts even

¹ [Does Teacher Testing Raise Teacher Quality? Evidence from State Certification Requirements \(iza.org\)](https://www.iza.org/does-teacher-testing-raise-teacher-quality-evidence-from-state-certification-requirements)



when factors like GPA and institution selectivity were comparable.² By allowing for only relatively narrow pathways, we may be screening out talented potential educators who would have a positive impact on students. This bill takes important strides to expand the teaching pipeline at a time of a historic educator shortage that is impacting school systems, educators, and students across the state.

While the Blueprint for Maryland's Future takes steps to increase staffing levels and improve diversity in the educator workforce, it also narrows certification pathways for educators. Starting in 2025, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future would require that all candidates pass portfolio-based assessments and would limit some pathways to teaching that currently exist. To be clear, this bill is not about lowering standards or removing tests entirely: it simply intends to provide additional pathways that allow aspiring educators to choose how to best showcase their skills.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 945.

² [Performance and Passing Rate Differences of African American and White Prospective Teachers on Praxis™ Examinations](#)