

FAVORABLE
House Bill 1369
Education – Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals

House Appropriations Committee
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Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 1369, which would establish a minimum starting wage for Education Support Professionals who work in our public schools.

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 over 40 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

The critical shortage of educators includes support staff in nearly every job category. These employees get students to school, clean and maintain our school buildings, support classroom instruction, prepare and serve healthy meals, provide clerical support, and more. To retain current employees and recruit new ones, we must raise wages for these public servants.

For the past three years, MSEA's advocacy for education support professionals (ESP) has been driven by the ESP Bill of Rights, a 10-point platform staking a claim for the living wage, contracts, on-the-job safety, fairness, and respect support staff deserve. House Bill 1369 is one of the bills that supports the ESP Bill of Rights.

Last year, through the Joint Chairman's Report, the General Assembly required the Maryland State Department of Education to survey support staff about pay equity and personal finances. The results tell a story: education support staff need and deserve a bigger paycheck.

- 62% of ESPs make \$42,270 or less (not including IT staff). According to the MIT wage calculator, a living wage in Maryland is \$51,460.
 - *Note: Inflation has increased 32% during the last 10 years.*
- Nearly 80% of ESPs say they need a second job to make ends meet

- More than 50% have at least two jobs
- Nearly 60% are considering leaving their jobs for better pay and benefits

MSDE Survey of Education Support Staff	Response	Percent of Respondents (N=12,104)
I am satisfied with my base pay rate and benefits	Strongly Disagree	52%
I am just getting by financially	Strongly Agree	35%
I am able to support myself and/or my family on my current pay.	Strongly Disagree	50%
I could handle a major unexpected expense	Strongly Disagree	64%
I have had to incur debts to make ends meet for myself and/or my family.	Strongly Agree	38%
Have you considered leaving your current role due to your current pay and benefits	Yes	57%

Too many ESPs work second jobs and struggle to provide for their families, buy homes, save for their futures, and afford community or four-year college tuition for their children to learn a trade and plan a career. The looming threats of privatization by school districts, which would import even lower-paid workers from outside areas, risk the stability of schools and communities and further undermine the value of ESPs and their jobs. One job should be enough for every ESP. ESPs should not have to work multiple jobs for financial independence.

MSEA urges a Favorable Report on House Bill 1369.