



**Committee:** Ways and Means

**Bill Number:** House Bill 732 – Public Schools – Career Ladder – Teacher Classroom Teaching Time

**Hearing Date:** February 25, 2025

**Position:** Oppose

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The Maryland School Counselor Association (MSCA), representing over 900 professional school counselors working with students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade in public, private, charter, and magnet schools, strongly opposes HB 732. This bill would increase the required classroom teaching time for educators on levels one, two, or three of the career ladder from 60% to 80%, significantly impacting school counseling professionals.

If enacted, HB 732 would harm school counselors across our school systems, many of whom are National Board-Certified Teachers (NBCT) in School Counseling. COMAR 13A.05.05.02 requires school counselors to spend 80% of their time providing direct services to students in multiple settings. As a result, they would be ineligible for the National Board Certification (NBC) enhancement, despite their rigorous efforts to achieve this distinguished credential.

National Board Certification is a crucial indicator of professional excellence, signifying that an educator has met rigorous national standards, surpassing state licensure requirements, and demonstrating deep expertise in their field. NBCTs contribute to improved student outcomes, greater career advancement, and recognition as experts in their profession.

Additionally, passing HB 732 would contradict the goals of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. While not a mandated component, NBC is encouraged within the Blueprint as a valuable professional milestone. The Blueprint supports NBC through financial incentives and career ladder progression, including a \$10,000 annual salary incentive for achieving certification and an additional \$7,000 for those teaching in low-performing schools.

For these reasons, MSCA urges an unfavorable report on HB 732 to protect the integrity of school counseling leadership and ensure continued support for National Board Certification in Maryland. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Jocelyn I. Collins at [jcollins@policypartners.net](mailto:jcollins@policypartners.net).