



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

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Committee: House Ways and Means Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 551 – Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Job Duties and Salaries

Hearing Date: February 12, 2025

Position: Support

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *House Bill 551 – Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Job Duties and Salaries*. This bill would provide salary increases for certain school personnel, which would help address ongoing shortages in school-based health providers.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future recognized the importance of addressing teacher shortages and ensuring that all students have access to highly-qualified teachers. To help the state achieve these goals the Blueprint created the “Career Ladder for Educators.” This program created a minimum teacher salary and a tiered salary system to incentivize educators to achieve advanced education and credentials. MOTA strongly supported the Blueprint, including the teacher career ladder. However, we believe that there should be an extension to the Blueprint to help address shortages of school health providers.

Occupational therapists (OTs) and occupational therapy assistants (OTAs) provide important services to students that help ensure that all students are able to receive a high-quality education. Similar to how OTs and OTAs work with patients to address barriers to completing activities of daily living, we help many students address barriers to classroom participation and completing classroom activities. Without OTs and OTAs many students would not be able to be educated even with the most highly qualified educators. Currently, school systems are having difficulty hiring and retaining OTs and OTAs because the salaries in our school system are not keeping up with salaries in private practice or other healthcare settings. This legislation would help attract and retain high-quality OTs and OTAs so that all Maryland students are able to access a high-quality education.

Thank you for your attention to this important bill. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.