



**Testimony in SUPPORT of  
House Bill 551: Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Salaries**

**Ways and Means Committee**

**Position: Support**

February 12, 2025

At Strong Schools Maryland, we work to support the faithful implementation and full funding of the promises legislated through the landmark Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Pillar 2 of the Blueprint commits Maryland to recruiting and retaining high quality and diverse teachers. A critical component of recruiting and retaining educators is an adequate and livable salary to compensate for their work in our public school systems. **For these reasons, we urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 551, which would, if enacted, mandate that all certificated public school employees receive this adequate compensation.**

Public school employees, such as speech pathologists, counselors, nurses, and more, are critical to our schools and broader communities, and therefore should be compensated as such. Yet, Maryland faces a staffing crisis in school buildings, directly impacting student achievement and well-being. Research consistently shows that uncompetitive wages drive shortages, increase burnout, and, in turn, negatively impact students.<sup>1</sup> House Bill 551 takes a targeted approach to improve recruitment and retention for these critical positions.

The Blueprint mandates that teachers be paid a minimum of \$60,000 annually by Fiscal Year 2026, provides salary increases for educators who earn their National Board Certification, and prioritizes additional support for certain schools to address equity gaps. **House Bill 551 would build upon the foundation of the Blueprint by expanding on these provisions by:**

- Extending the \$60,000 mandated salary minimum to *all* certificated school employees.
- Expanding eligibility for all salary increases that are currently limited to Nationally Board Certified (NBC) teachers to additional highly qualified educators.

The Blueprint laid the foundation, and HB551 builds upon it by expanding salary incentives in a multitude of ways. This bill recognizes the importance of *all* those employed by the public school system, expands the ways in which educators can secure salary increases, and incentivizes teachers to teach at schools in an equitable manner. All students deserve diverse and high quality leaders in their school communities. Achieving that starts with expanding the ways in which our public education workforce can achieve adequate minimum compensation for their dedicated work. **For these reasons, we urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 551.**

**Please contact** Kenzie Funk at [kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org](mailto:kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org) for additional questions.

1. [Tackling Teacher Shortages: What Can States and Districts Do?](#)