

FAVORABLE
House Bill 959
School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact

House Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 959, which would enter Maryland into the School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact. The Compact, developed in a similar manner to the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact, would authorize licensed school psychologists who hold multistate licenses to provide school psychological services in member states and establish requirements for multistate licensure. The Compact taking effect is contingent on the enactment of substantially similar legislation in seven states.

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).

School psychologists provide critical behavioral health services that prepare students to succeed in the classroom and beyond. Maryland lacks a sufficient workforce of school psychologists to meet students' needs: though the National Association for School Psychologists recommends a school psychologist-to-student ratio of 1:500, Maryland's ratio stands at 1:1,053.¹ Our state's pipeline of incoming school psychologists is improving, but is still not

¹ NASP Policy Platform. National Association of School Psychologists (2024).
<https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/policy-priorities/nasp-policy-platform#:~:text=Remedy%20for%20Shortages%20in%20School%20Psychology&text=NASP%20recommen ds%20a%20ratio%20of,meet%20the%20needs%20of%20students.>

strong enough remedy this – there are just 0.4 new school psychologists for every 10,000 K-12 students.² Joining the Compact represents a low-cost, near-term measure to increase the number of school psychologists by removing licensing barriers for school psychologists moving from one state to another. Within the Compact, licensed school psychologists would enjoy license reciprocity, enabling Maryland to recruit a greater number of experienced providers.

The Compact in this bill will take effect when seven states have adopted it; presently, West Virginia and Colorado are the only members states.³ Maryland has an opportunity to lead by becoming the third state to join the Compact, sending a message to students, families, and educators that we recognize the importance of school psychologists and the critical services they provide. We will also continue to advocate for school psychologists and other student health professionals to be compensated as the essential staff they are.

This bill represents an opportunity to remove barriers and welcome licensed, experienced school psychologists to Maryland – it is an opportunity we should take.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 959.

² State Shortages Data Dashboard. NASP (2024). <https://www.nasponline.org/about-school-psychology/state-shortages-data-dashboard>

³ Interstate Compact for School Psychologists (2024). <https://compacts.csg.org/compact/interstate-compact-for-school-psychologists/>