

Committee: House Ways and Means

Bill Number: HB 551 Primary and Secondary Education- Public School Employees - Salaries

Date: February 12, 2025

Position: Support

I am writing to express our strong support for the legislation, *Primary and Secondary Education - Public School Employees - Salaries* HB0551, sponsored by Delegate Feldmark. We commend Del. Feldmark's commitment to addressing the critical issue of fair and equitable compensation for public school employees.

The bill provides salary increases for certain school personnel to improve recruitment and retention. Despite the Blueprint Comprehensive Implementation plan acknowledging that school counselors should be given NBC salary incentives, the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has yet to develop guidance for the LEAs regarding NBC certification for school counselors, media specialists, and other positions and the requirements to be eligible for the National Board Certification (NBC) salary increases.¹

I believe that HB 551 would provide a clear path for LEAs to implement NBC salary incentives and cut the red tape in waiting on AIB and MSDE to issue guidance.

This bill legislation will ensure that our dedicated educators and support staff are properly valued for the crucial work they do in Maryland's public schools. School counselors play an essential role in supporting students' academic, social, and emotional growth, and their compensation must reflect the high standards of service they provide to our students and communities.

We believe that providing salary increases, subject to certain conditions, will help attract and retain highly qualified professionals in the field of education, ensuring that Maryland's students receive the best possible support and guidance. This bill aligns with our ongoing efforts to advocate for the well-being of school counselors and to ensure that all school personnel are supported and empowered to succeed in their roles.

As President of the Maryland School Counselor Association, I am proud to stand in strong support of HB0551 and encourage the committee and fellow legislators to pass this important bill to ensure that Maryland continues to lead the way in supporting its educators.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to public education in Maryland. We look forward to continued collaboration in ensuring that all school employees are valued for their hard work and commitment to our students.

Sincerely,

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¹ See p. 99 of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Comprehensive Implementation Plan
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hQyHcPO_5T703I3esxE1ocBrs5WT96d7/view