

FAVORABLE
House Bill 551
Primary and Secondary Education – Public School Employees – Salaries

House Ways and Means Committee
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Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association strongly supports House Bill 551, which seeks to take targeted steps aimed at improving the educator shortages that are impacting school systems and job types across the state. This bill is one of MSEA's top 2025 legislative priorities to help address the educator shortage and excessive workloads.

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).

MSEA is excited to continue to partner with legislative leaders to build on the legislature's strong record of commitment to our public schools with policies to meet this moment and ensure that no Marylanders are left behind. Educators are focused on helping students excel after the pandemic, yet are doing so in the face of excessive workload issues which are exacerbated by staffing shortages in every school building.

The staffing shortage affects the academic achievement, emotional wellness, and safety of our students. Students and families are faced with more trauma, unaddressed social emotional needs, societal divisiveness, and high levels of stress. These have contributed to more disciplinary issues that too often lead to violence between students and sometimes against staff members. To provide additional student support, targeted interventions, trainings, and restorative practices, our schools need more qualified mental health professionals and support staff. Schools must be the safe and supportive learning and teaching environments they are meant to be, and that students, educators, and families deserve. House Bill 551 takes limited but strategic reforms to better recruit and retain the outstanding educators that all students and schools deserve and depend on.



As the General Assembly seeks to determine what is working and what is not in the Blueprint, we encourage you to pass this bill to further improve upon the Blueprint and meet the current needs of our public school systems.

The bill would expand eligibility for all salary increases that are currently limited to Nationally Board Certified (NBC) teachers to additional highly qualified educators. There are many teachers, who are not directly the teacher of record, who have National Board Certifications but are currently not eligible for the state portion of the salary increases (\$10,000 for NBC and \$7,000 more for teaching in an identified low-performing school). This bill would expand eligibility for these increases to those teaching in critical shortage areas like reading and math specialists, school counselors, literacy interventionists, gifted and talented specialists, and more who are just as important to the daily instruction and success for students as the classroom teacher/teacher of record. Leveling the playing field is important to making sure that highly qualified educators in these roles stay in them rather than move to NBC-eligible roles and exacerbate shortages in non-NBC-eligible roles. They've earned the national certifications, they work directly with students daily, and they should not be left out of the salary enhancement.

The bill would expand eligibility for these salary increases to behavioral health and other school-based student service providers who obtain highly regarded national accreditation in their profession. School psychologists, speech pathologists, and others who work directly with students are not eligible for National Board Certification but have the ability to gain national certification from other accreditation bodies. Under the bill, the Maryland State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board would vet and determine what the appropriate and applicable accreditations are in each job type. Educators in these fields face often staggering caseloads and shrinking pipelines to fill these critical positions, underscoring the importance of our efforts to recruit and retain them through simple changes like this bill proposes. This would also incentivize our most experienced professionals to stay and serve students and mentor colleagues who are earlier in their careers. Again, they've earned the top accreditation it's just not under the National Board because National Board doesn't offer it for their subject area.

MSEA strongly urges a favorable report of House Bill 551. We urge you to include this in any consideration of amending the Blueprint.