



AFT 340 AFL-CIO
Seton Business Park
5800 Metro Drive, 2nd Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

**Senate Bill 764 – Education – Minimum Wage for Education Support Professionals
Budget and Taxation Committee
March 3, 2026, 1pm**

FAVORABLE

On behalf of the Baltimore Teachers Union, which proudly represents educators and school support staff in Baltimore City Public Schools, we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB764, establishing a \$25 per hour starting wage for all paraprofessionals and school-related personnel. Our union includes paraeducators, instructional assistants, school secretaries, bus transportation aides, and other essential support professionals. These employees are not ancillary to the educational mission — they are central to it.

Paraeducators and instructional assistants provide direct academic and behavioral support to students every day. They work one-on-one with children who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), help implement behavior intervention plans, support literacy and math instruction in small groups, and assist teachers in managing inclusive classrooms. For many students with disabilities, a paraprofessional is the adult who ensures they can safely access instruction alongside their peers.

Bus transportation aides are often the first and last school representatives a child sees each day. They ensure students — including medically fragile students and those with significant disabilities — arrive safely to and from school. They de-escalate behavioral challenges in confined spaces, manage medical or mobility needs, and provide reassurance to anxious children. Their role is critical to student safety.

School secretaries are the operational backbone of our schools. They manage attendance systems, respond to families in crisis, coordinate substitute coverage, maintain compliance records, and serve as the front-facing connection between families and the school community. In many cases, they are triaging student health concerns, supporting homeless families with documentation, and responding to emergencies — all while keeping the school functioning smoothly.

These roles require skill, emotional intelligence, patience, and deep commitment to children. They are especially critical in high-poverty districts where students may need additional social-emotional support, and where schools rely on strong relationships with families and community partners.

Proper compensation is not simply about fairness to workers — it is about ensuring that the adults entrusted with caring for our young people are able to remain in the profession. It is about building a stable, skilled workforce that reflects and supports the communities we serve.

Students with special needs, in particular, rely on continuity and trusted relationships. High turnover among support staff can be deeply destabilizing for children who depend on consistency to thrive.

Maryland has made historic investments in public education. Those investments must include the full team of professionals who make learning possible. A \$25 per hour starting wage sends a clear message that we value the people who feed, transport, support, and care for our students every single day.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Teachers Union respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 764.