



Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), Maryland Education Coalition (MEC), and the Blueprint Coalition, strongly support **Senate Bill 0238 School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact**. School psychologists (SPs) are uniquely trained to help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. In collaboration with families and other school staff, we help create safe and supportive learning environments in which all students can thrive.

The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a ratio of 1 school psychologist for every 500 students; however Maryland is only able to provide 1 SP for every 1,053 students. This is a significant shortage that negatively impacts our students and communities. Passing the compact will help address this shortage. Attracting more SPs to Maryland will be good for our students, school communities, and the economy.

The Interstate Compact for School Psychologists (ICSP) is poised to address this shortage by making it easier for qualified SPs to get to work quickly in Maryland. The ICSP simply provides licensure mobility in member states while upholding a high standard of practice, with no fiscal note. It is similar to PSYPACT, which provides the same benefit to licensed psychologists in Maryland and over 30 other states.

Passing this compact **now** comes with distinct advantages for Maryland in three ways. The first is **influence**. The compact is currently being stood up; by coming to the table now Maryland has greater influence on the details (e.g., which test will qualify SPs, etc). The second is **window of opportunity**. The compact is already passed in 7 states and proposed in four more. The compact is coming. The earlier Maryland joins the more likely we are to attract newly mobile members of the workforce who are looking for a change. Finally, this is an important way for legislators to **show support for SPs**, who are not otherwise provided for in the Blueprint. Addressing the shortage goes a long way to making it easier for SPs to do their jobs well.

Although movement across states will fluctuate, we believe Maryland is in a strong position to benefit from this compact. The average SP makes \$10,000 more in Maryland than in any other region in the country. Compared to other states, Maryland has the third highest density of hospitals, fifth highest density of higher education institutions, and a robust military sector. Healthcare providers, academics, researchers, military family members and civilian personnel may be more likely to seek and accept a Maryland job if their spouse can start work right away.

For SPs themselves, **Senate Bill 0238** reduces the financial and administrative burden associated with meeting licensure requirements when moving states, and it enables SPs to quickly begin providing services that will help students.

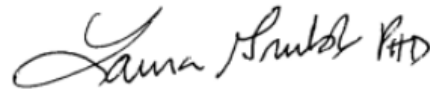
For the above reasons, MSPA, Maryland Education Coalition (MEC), and the Blueprint Coalition respectfully

urge a favorable report on SB 238: a simple way to help address the school psychologist shortage. If we can provide any further information or be of any assistance, please contact us at legislative@mSPAonline.org or Sarah Peters at speters@hbstrategies.us or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,



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Ellie Mitchell and Rick Tyler, Jr.

Co-Chairs, Maryland Education Coalition

