

XHB 828 AFSCME Council 3 Testimony_FAV.pdf

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Position: FAV



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Patrick Moran – President

**HB 828 – State Board of Education – Membership – Educational Support Member
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
April 7, 2026**

FAVORABLE

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 supports House Bill 828. House Bill 828 would alter the existing composition of the State Board of Education to include an educational support professional who is actively working in a public school as a noncertificated, nonsupervisory, public school employee. Under the bill, the Governor would appoint the educational support member, who received the highest number of votes after an election by education support professionals in the state.

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 represents approximately 55,000 public service workers across varying levels of government including city, county, state, and higher education. AFSCME members are on the frontlines every day delivering critical public services our communities depend on. Our union is proud to represent education support professionals across the state who work for Baltimore City Public Schools, Baltimore County Public Schools, Allegany County Public Schools, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Howard County Public Schools, Harford County Public Schools, Carroll County Public Schools, and Charles County Public Schools. AFSCME members perform critical services that enable the operation of our public schools every day including bus transportation, food service, custodial service, administrative, clerical, IT support, building and grounds maintenance, and more.

Despite the critical role that education support professionals play in our public education system, often they are overlooked and forgotten when policy decisions are made. Students, families, certificated staff, and administrators rely on education support professionals every day, yet often our members do not feel seen or heard.

Passing House Bill 828 would send a strong signal to every education support professional across the state of Maryland that their perspective, insight, and voice matters, that their labor is valued, and that they have meaningful contributions to offer in the improvement of our public education system. Our State Board of Education should be reflective of the individuals who make our public education system happen.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 828.

SEIU Local 500 - Testimony in Support of HB 828 Se

Uploaded by: Christopher Cano

Position: FAV



Testimony - HB 828, State Board of Education - Membership - Educational Support
Member
Favorable
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
April 7, 2026
Christopher C. Cano, MPA
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairman Feldman & Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of SEIU Local 500, which represents thousands of educational support professionals across Maryland, we respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 828.

House Bill 828 takes an important and long overdue step toward equity in public education governance by adding an Educational Support Professional (ESP) member to the Maryland State Board of Education.

For generations, educational support professionals — paraeducators, bus drivers, food service workers, custodians, school secretaries, security staff, and other noncertificated school employees — have been essential to the daily functioning and safety of our schools. We are the first adults students see in the morning and often the last they see at the end of the day. We support instruction, manage classrooms, provide behavioral interventions, feed children, transport them safely, and maintain healthy learning environments.

Yet despite this indispensable role, ESPs have historically been excluded from the highest levels of educational decision-making.

Teachers have a designated seat. Parents have a designated seat. Students have a designated seat. But the professionals who make up a significant portion of the school workforce — and who work most closely with students in their daily lived experience — have had no formal voice in State Board governance.

House Bill 828 corrects that inequity.

This bill ensures that one of the 13 regular members of the State Board will be an actively working educational support professional elected by their peers statewide. That structure mirrors the teacher member process and reflects a core democratic principle: those most affected by policy decisions deserve representation in shaping them.

Educational support professionals bring a perspective that is too often missing in statewide conversations:

- We understand how policy translates into practice in cafeterias, buses, hallways, and special education classrooms.
- We see firsthand the impact of staffing shortages, funding inequities, and implementation gaps.
- We support students with disabilities, English learners, and students experiencing poverty — often serving as trusted adults in their lives.
- Excluding ESPs from governance does not make policy neutral; it simply makes it incomplete.

At a time when Maryland is implementing the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, we cannot afford incomplete perspectives. True stakeholder engagement means including all components of the school community — not just some. The Blueprint calls for collaboration, workforce stability, and elevating the professionals who serve students. HB 828 aligns directly with those values.

This bill is also about dignity and respect. Educational support professionals are not peripheral to public education — we are foundational to it. Formal representation on the State Board affirms that our expertise matters and that our voices belong in the rooms where decisions are made.

Importantly, HB 828 preserves appropriate guardrails consistent with existing law, including limitations related to appeals matters, mirroring the structure already in place for the teacher and student members. This ensures balance while still providing meaningful participation.

For too long, ESPs have been stakeholders without a seat at the table. House Bill 828 provides that seat.

SEIU Local 500 respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 828 and stands ready to work with the General Assembly to ensure that Maryland's education governance reflects the full community it serves.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

MSEA Testimony

Uploaded by: Paul Lemle

Position: FAV

**Favorable
House Bill 828
State Board of Education - Membership - Educational Support Member**

**Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
April 7, 2026**

**Paul Lemle
MSEA President**

The Maryland State Education Association strongly supports House Bill 828. This legislation allows for the addition of more educator voices on the State Board of Education. As passed in the House, it would designate a seat for an elected education support professional on the State Board of Education.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools and community colleges, teaching and supporting our almost 900,000 K-12 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA represents more than 44 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Seven years ago, this body recognized that when the State Board of Education is setting policies and regulations for our schools, it was necessary to have an educator at the table – someone who is in a classroom every day. As such, we have a designated teacher member on the State Board, who provides an essential perspective on how Board decisions will affect teachers' day-to-day operations and students' learning.

To fully represent educator voices on the State Board, we must include the perspectives of an education support professional. Education support professionals are often underrecognized for their essential contributions to our schools even though they are integral by providing daily critical services that enable the operations of our schools. Imagine a school with no bus drivers dropping off kids, no front desk staff checking them in, no school nurse responding to scrapes and stomachaches, no food service staff serving breakfast and lunch, and no paraeducators assisting students and teachers. It wouldn't look much like a school at all.



This bill would not increase the size of the State Board, nor would it displace any other specialized appointees. Representation of education support professionals is a vital component of MSEA's ESP Bill of Rights work. We are interested in working with the General Assembly, the State Board of Education, and any other partners to either guarantee that representation or otherwise provide a pathway for such an appointment in the future. We continue to fight to lift up the voices of educators on the State Board.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 828.

HB 828_ State Board of Education - Membership - E

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

HB 828: State Board of Education - Membership - Educational Support Member:
Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Education, Energy & the Environment Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE HB 828**, *State Board of Education - Membership - Educational Support Member*.

HB 828 would alter the membership of the State Board of Education by adding a dedicated "educational support member" — a **noncertificated**, nonsupervisory public school employee **selected via an election among bargaining unit members** and appointed by the Governor. While I recognize the valuable contributions of educational support professionals (such as paraeducators, custodians, and other staff) to our schools, this change is unnecessary and could undermine the Board's effectiveness and impartiality.

The State Board of Education is tasked with setting statewide policy, regulations, and standards for all aspects of public education. Its current composition already includes a teacher member to represent classroom educators, along with appointees intended to provide broad, diverse perspectives focused on the overall interests of students, families, and the public. Adding a specific seat reserved for a union-affiliated bargaining unit employee introduces a direct special-interest representative into what should remain a policy-focused, nonpartisan body. **This risks shifting the Board's priorities toward labor-specific concerns (e.g., wages, working conditions, or bargaining issues) rather than student achievement, curriculum quality, accountability, or fiscal responsibility.**

Moreover, the proposed election process among educational support professionals statewide could politicize appointments and favor organized labor interests over the broader educational community. **Maryland already has mechanisms for input from support staff through unions, advisory councils, and public comment periods—expanding the Board's size and mandating a representational seat for one employee category sets a problematic precedent that could lead to demands for additional reserved seats from other groups.**

The Board should remain focused on evidence-based, student-centered governance without structural changes that embed advocacy roles for specific workforce segments. For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against HB 828**.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my concerns regarding this important education related legislation.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals