



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director  
1217 S. Potomac Street  
Baltimore, MD 21224  
410-935-7281  
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

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COMMITTEE: House Ways and Means Committee  
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, provides this **letter of information** on Senate Bill 904.

This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), by July 1, 2027, to design and develop a new system of in-person professional development in public schools for paraeducators and other education support professionals (ESPs) that is paid and occurs during weekday school hours. In designing the system, MSDE must consult with local boards and nonprofit organizations with experience supporting ESPs, including the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA). The General Assembly finds that paraeducators and other ESPs benefit from in-person training and expresses intent that such training be expanded to at least two days of high-quality professional development during each school year. The bill may not be construed to diminish obligations under collective bargaining agreements or employment benefit programs that establish greater requirements.

PSSAM appreciates the General Assembly's focus on strengthening professional development opportunities for paraeducators and other education support professionals (ESPs). These staff play a critical role in supporting student learning and well-being, and high-quality professional learning is essential to their success.

We do, however, have concerns regarding the feasibility and effectiveness of a centrally developed, statewide professional development system for this workforce. Paraeducator roles vary significantly not only across local education agencies (LEAs), but also within individual

school systems. For example, a single LEA may include positions such as Bus Assistant, Instructional Assistant I and II, one-on-one instructional assistants, PreK instructional assistants, Title I assistants, and family and program support staff. Each of these roles requires distinct skills, knowledge, and day-to-day responsibilities.

Given this wide spectrum of roles, it is unclear whether a single, statewide professional learning model can be sufficiently targeted to meet the needs of all paraeducators and ESPs. A one-size-fits-all approach risks being too broad to be meaningful or too generic to support the specific demands of individual positions.

Local school systems are already providing targeted, job-embedded professional development aligned to the unique responsibilities of their paraeducators and support staff. These efforts are often developed in close coordination with school leaders and reflect the specific instructional, operational, and student support needs of each community.

Given these existing local efforts, we question that a centrally designed statewide program would add meaningful value, or whether it may instead create redundancy or operational challenges for school systems.

We encourage continued collaboration with LEAs to ensure that any professional development framework builds on existing local practices, maintains flexibility, and supports the diverse roles of paraeducators and ESPs across Maryland.

PSSAM appreciates the opportunity to provide this **letter of information** and looks forward to continued dialogue on how best to support this critical workforce.