
TO: House Ways and Means Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 803 – Career Ladder - Teacher Classroom Teaching Time

DATE: February 25, 2026

POSITION: Oppose

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) oppose HB 803 – Career Ladder - Teacher Classroom Teaching Time, which alters existing statute governing the Career Ladder for Educators to increase the time spent teaching in the classroom from an average of 60% to an average of 80%. This, in turn, will decrease the amount of time spent on other teaching activities (e.g., improving instruction, working with students who need additional help, and leading/participating in professional learning) to 20% of the teachers’ working time.

The State Board and MSDE oppose HB 803 because it is inconsistent with the foundational Blueprint concept that increasing the amount of time teachers have to collaborate with their peers and work with students who need additional instruction will improve student outcomes and decrease attrition by improving teacher working conditions.

In addition to independent planning time, teachers’ instructional quality improves when they have opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues. Research demonstrates that teachers working in more supportive professional environments improve their effectiveness more over time than teachers working in less supportive contexts.¹ A study in 2015 concluded that teachers and schools that engage in better-quality collaboration have better achievement gains in math and reading.² A research review in 2017 found that schools that are more collaborative have been shown to have stronger student academic outcomes than schools that are less collaborative.³

Providing time for teachers to work collaboratively to review curricula, plan instruction, identify where students are struggling, and adjust accordingly is critical. Teachers consistently identify increased planning and collaboration time as one of the top ways to increase teacher retention and job satisfaction. The Educators for Excellence Voices from the Classroom 2022 Survey of America’s Educators revealed that 82% of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) respondents identified professional support and

¹ Kraft, M., & Papay, J. (2014). Can Professional Environments in Schools Promote Teacher Development? Explaining Heterogeneity in Returns to Teaching Experience. *Educational Effectiveness and Policy Analysis*, 36(4), 476-500; Ronfeldt, R.; Owen Farmer, S., McQueen, K., & Grissom, J. (2015). Teacher collaboration in instructional teams and student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 52(3), 475–514; Pil, F. K., & Leana, C. (2009). Applying organizational research to public school reform: The effects of teacher human and social capital on student performance. *Academy of Management Journal* (52), 1101-1124.

² Ronfeldt, M., Farmer, S., McQueen, K., & Grissom, J. (2015). Teacher collaboration in instructional teams and student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 52(3), 475-514.

³ Schleifer, D., Rinehart, C., & Yanisch, T. (2017). Teacher Collaboration In Perspective: A Guide to Research. Public Agenda. Available at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED591332.pdf>

leadership opportunities as being the most likely to keep teachers in the profession.⁴ Teachers of color surveyed in the 2022 State of the American Teacher Survey indicated that working with other staff of color and nurturing positive collegial relationships could boost retention.⁵

The significant and permanent reduction in time for teachers to be engaged in other teaching activities proposed by HB 803 could have a detrimental impact on teacher retention. The State Board and MSDE are dedicated to building a diverse, high-quality teacher workforce and accelerating positive student outcomes. Altering the intent of the Career Ladder for Educators by decreasing the time teachers will ultimately spend improving instruction, working with students who need additional help, and participating in professional learning may negatively impact teachers and students.

MSDE and the State Board respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate House Bill 803. Please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov, or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at zachary.hands1@maryland.gov, if you would like any additional information.

⁴ Educators for Excellence, Education Trust. (2022). *Voices from the classroom: Deep dive BIPOC teachers*.

⁵ Steiner, E., Greer, L., Berdie, L., Schwartz, H., Woo, A., Doan, S., Lawrence, R., Wolfe, R., & Gittens, A. (2022). [*Prioritizing strategies to racially diversify the K-12 teacher workforce: Findings from the state of the American teacher and state of the American principal surveys*](#). RAND Corporation.