

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS
House Bill 479
Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program and Program
Workgroup – Establishment

House Ways & Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association supports, with certain amendments, House Bill 479. As written, the bill would establish the Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program, which would be administered and implemented by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in consultation with the Maryland Higher Education Commission. The University System of Maryland would be required to develop, in consultation with the Department and the Commission, the program and the teacher preparation pathway. It would also establish the Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program Workgroup to study and report on program needs and structure.

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

Maryland continues to face educator shortages, and as we invest in the pipeline of future teachers and education support professionals, we must increase our focus on recruiting high school students who are deciding their next steps. We appreciate the sponsor's commitment to investing in young Marylanders and preparing the next generation of talented educators.

It is crucial to ensure that any new program model is aligned with existing initiatives, including the Teacher Academy of Maryland (TAM), a four-course Career and Technology Education (CTE) program for high school students who wish to

pursue a career in education.¹ Often, TAM students complete their ParaPro certification through the program, which enables them to work as paraeducators after graduation. TAM is active in Charles County Public Schools, Calvert County Public Schools, and St. Mary's County Public Schools.^{2 3 4} Additionally, MSDE recently launched a Registered Teacher Apprenticeship that is open to Marylanders 16 years or older, and Charles County Public Schools is already a participating employer.⁵

We are enthusiastic about the breadth of new pathways to careers in public education, and we welcome efforts to strengthen partnerships and scale programs to reach as many high school students as possible. To that end, we recommend the following amendments:

- (1) Designate members of the workgroup from each of the local educators' unions in Southern Maryland to ensure input from the educators who have firsthand experience implementing CTE and dual enrollment efforts.
- (2) Adjust the charge of the workgroup to the following:
 - a. Seeking opportunities to expand existing early teacher preparation programs.
 - b. Strengthening partnerships or establishing new partnerships that promote inter-county collaboration.
 - c. Identifying strategies to reach a wide range of students and increase access to programs so that participants in early teacher preparation programs reflect the diversity of Southern Maryland.
 - d. Determining whether a new program or an expansion of existing initiatives would be most effective in promoting education careers to students in Southern Maryland.

With these amendments, we urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 479.

¹ CTE Programs, Maryland State Department of Education. <https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/pages/cte-programs-of-study/clusters/hrs.aspx#:~:text=TAM%20students%20can%20enroll%20directly,with%20a%20teacher%20preparation%20program>.

² Teacher Academy of Maryland, Charles County Public Schools. <https://www.ccboe.com/departments/career-and-technical-education/programs-by-school/st-charles-high-school/teacher-academy-of-maryland-tam>

³ Teacher Academy of Maryland, Career and Technical Education, Calvert County Public Schools. <https://www.calvertnet.k12.md.us/departments/instruction/career-and-technical-education>

⁴ Human Resource Services, St. Mary's County Public Schools. <https://courses.smcps.org/james-a-forrest-tech-center/human-resource-services>

⁵ MSDE-Sponsored Registered Teacher Apprenticeship, Maryland State Department of Education. <https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DEE/Program-Approval/Registered-Teacher-Apprenticeships.aspx>