

Testimony of Dr. Joey N. Jones
Before the House Ways and Means Committee
In Support of HOUSE BILL 0476

Education – Certification in Secondary Education Content Areas – Extended Grade Range

Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

It is a pleasure and honor to speak to you on behalf of the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) and principals throughout the state of Maryland.

As an organization, MASSP supports HOUSE BILL 0476 – Certification in Secondary Education Content Areas. In many school districts, the school levels are divided by elementary school (grades K-5), middle school (grades 6-8), and high school (grades 9-12).

Prior to this arrangement of levels, schools were divided by elementary school (grades K-6), middle school or junior high (grades 7 & 8 or 7-9) and high school (10-12 or 9-12). With the addition of 6th grade at the middle school level, administrators are required to hire teachers with elementary school certification for grade 6 and teachers with secondary school certification for grades 7 and 8.

As a middle school principal, I know first-hand, the challenges of hiring high quality teachers under the current regulation. The current regulation poses undue burdens on middle school administrators for both hiring and scheduling.

For example, imagine interviewing a high quality, no doubt, superstar, math teacher with an elementary, K-6 certification. While your master scheduling needs require a candidate to teach not only three sections of math at the sixth grade level, but two sections of math at the seventh grade level. So, what do you do? (**PAUSE**).

House Bill 0476 eliminates this question and provides the flexibility to hire for excellence and provide high quality instruction for all students. By passing HB0476, you will increase the opportunities for middle school administrators to hire the best candidates possible with one certification for all three (3) grades. By aligning teacher certification with the middle school grades, teachers will be able to teach at any of the middle school grade levels.

House Bill 0476 makes a lot of sense for the current structure of many schools in Maryland. **It's a win-win-win situation.**

- **Who wins?** Teachers win with the added flexibility of teaching at different levels, particularly within a middle school.
- **Who wins?** Students win with the access to great instruction and possible looping throughout their middle school experience.
- **Who wins?** Administrators win with the flexibility to hire great teachers and develop a master schedule that meets the needs of all students.

I respectfully ask your favorable support of this Bill. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.