

## **Testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee**

### **In Support of HB476**

#### **Education - Certification in Secondary Education Content Areas - Expanded Grade Range**

Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB476.

My name is Troy Bradbury and I am a 20-year veteran teacher at Eleanor Roosevelt High School where I teach and coordinate the AP Capstone program and teach English. I am also a mentor teacher and Professional Development School site coordinator for the University of Maryland College of Education. I am currently mentoring my 16th intern.

I am here today to advocate for a simple idea that will address a multi-faceted problem we are facing in middle schools. Changing our current certification from 7-12 to 6-12 will have a positive ripple effect through Maryland education- it will help:

- Middle schools
- University Ed programs
- Interns
- Current Teachers and transfer teachers

I also spoke with a colleague who is an administrator at a high-needs middle school in Prince George's County and he told me this story, which really illustrates the issue of this mismatch in our current certification model.

'Last summer a sixth-grade science position opened at my school. As I browsed the shortlist of possible candidates, one resume stood out. An experienced educator that moved here from a different state, a background in science and an exceptional academic record. I quickly scheduled interviews and was ready to offer the position to this candidate that was clearly the most qualified. Unfortunately, she declined. While she was excited about joining our team and teaching 6th-grade science, she would have had to become certified in elementary education before the end of the year to be assured that she could stay in the position. She was certified to teach 7-12th grade science, but to teach 6th-grade science she had to have an elementary certification.

Changing this certification from 7-12 to 6-12 is a proactive step in the right direction for the state of Maryland.

- It will allow middle schools to hire teachers with specialized content knowledge in grades 6-8, giving our students better access to quality teachers.
- It will mitigate the hiring of long term subs and teachers teaching out of certification for positions that could easily be taught by highly qualified teachers.

- It will allow for greater flexibility and expansion of teachers who can be hired-both instate and out of state teachers.
- It will save middle schools money due to having to hire multiple teachers and/or long term subs for specific grades- year by year
- It will allow qualified teachers to fill positions that are desperately needed.
- It will save teachers money and time by not having to take additional coursework and certification tests.
- It will mitigate teacher transfers.
- It allows for Institutions of Higher Education like The University of Maryland to place interns at middle school placements that can meet the growing need to train quality teachers.
- It allows for interns to have higher quality training by mentors and access to jobs to fill the growing needs of our schools and students.

I recently spoke to my close colleague, the Professional Development Coordinator at the University of Maryland who stated that both secondary and elementary ed have stated this is a good idea.

I spoke to a colleague who worked at MSDE for almost 20 years and now works at Goucher College in education - she also said this is a game-changing move that will make life easier for all stakeholders involved.

In speaking with others to prepare for this testimony, I have asked everyone to help me think of what any potential counter-arguments could be, and no one could think of any. Changing this certification from 7-12 to 6-12 is a proactive step in the right direction for the State of Maryland.

(In doing additional research- the state of Florida certifies teachers 6-12. We don't want to be behind Florida.)

This simple change in certification can make a huge, long-lasting impact on our teachers, it can save money in multiple ways and provide more access to a high-quality education for our students.

Thank you for your time and for allowing me to speak.