



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: SB 311

TITLE: Nonpublic Education - Special Education Placements - Renaming and Teacher Salaries (Teacher Pay Parity Act)

DATE: February 8, 2023

POSITION: Oppose

COMMITTEE: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

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This bill requires a nonpublic educational program for students with disabilities to provide its teachers a salary that is equivalent to public school teachers of similar training and experience in the same county. If the costs to do so are not met by the existing State and local cost sharing mechanism in current law for nonpublic placements, such additional funding is to be paid for by the State and the local school system in the same proportion as provided by that mechanism. Funding for other components of a nonpublic educational program may not be reduced to provide for required nonpublic teacher salary increases.

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), **opposes** SB 311.

The state's twenty-four local school systems are working hard to implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation, which includes a significant increase in teacher compensation to bring the teaching profession on par with professions that require similar education standards. These provisions include a 10% increase in salaries by FY '24 over FY '19 to close the gap of average teacher salaries in peer states. The Blueprint also calls for a \$60,000 starting salary for all teachers by FY '27. These are ambitious goals and each system is working with fidelity to meet these requirements. These provisions are already putting pressure on local systems to provide equal increases to personnel that are not specifically identified in the Blueprint, yet are integral staff in our systems, including psychologists, social workers, reading specialists, and more.

This bill would add an unfunded mandate for local school systems to pay for costs they have no control over. We recognize that the vast majority of students at these nonpublic schools are special education students that could not be accommodated in their zoned school. However, the legislation would hold LEAs responsible for ensuring salary parity between public and private school teacher salaries without any local control over these schools; teachers in nonpublic placements are not part of the bargaining process. We appreciate and support our nonpublic education providers, but as last year's fiscal note indicates, this bill creates a potential decrease in public school funding since school districts are responsible for paying a percentage of the tuition of these nonpublic placements.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **opposes** SB 311 and requests an unfavorable committee report.