

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 961  
State Department of Education - School Psychologist Recruitment  
Program**

**House Ways and Means Committee  
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The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 961, which would establish the School Psychologist Recruitment Program within the State Department of Education to provide professional development programs and aid for a certification fee to school psychologists and individuals seeking to become school psychologists and to reimburse school psychologists for professional conference expenses. It would also require the Program to select a maximum of 100 individuals for the Program, giving priority to individuals from groups underrepresented among professional personnel in the State.

MSEA represents 75,000 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 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Given the ongoing personnel, resource, and support challenges facing our schools and districts, investing in the training and recruitment of student health professionals such as school psychologists is an essential step toward meeting students' needs. Our state does not currently have a sufficient mental and behavioral health professional pipeline to meet professionally recommended student-to-staff ratios, let alone the number of staff required to meet the needs of students. As such, efforts to ensure that we can recruit, train, and deploy additional behavioral and mental health professionals in our schools, especially those from underrepresented communities, are important.



MSEA believes that concerted efforts must be made to recruit and train school psychologists, especially those from underrepresented groups, and we believe this legislation is a helpful step to that end. We will also continue to advocate for school psychologists and other student health professionals to be compensated as the essential staff they are.

**We urge the Committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 961.**