



**PSSAM**  
Public School Superintendents' Association  
OF MARYLAND

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**BILL:** HB 961

**TITLE:** State Department of Education - School Psychologist Recruitment Program

**DATE:** March 1, 2023

**POSITION:** Support

**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means

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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports** House Bill 961.

House Bill 961 seeks to establish the School Psychologist Recruitment Program within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Additionally, the bill requires that the Program provide professional development programs and aid for school psychologists and individuals seeking to become school psychologists, as well as reimbursements to school psychologists for professional conference expenses.

Maryland's superintendents recognize the importance of promoting the positive mental health of all students through the development of impactful relationships and by teaching resilience. Student mental health is of particular importance as students are faced with the post-traumatic effects of a global health pandemic. School counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, pupil personnel workers, and school nurses collaborate with staff, parents/guardians, and the community to overcome barriers to learning for students. The emphasis on multi-tiered systems of support, which also include Section 504 accommodations and restorative practices, further supports these efforts to emphasize relationships, rigor, and readiness for all Maryland students. By removing barriers, providing resources, and teaching appropriate social and emotional skills, students gain the tools to be productive citizens.

School psychology is currently a critical shortage area for all local school systems in Maryland. Therefore, systems would certainly benefit from a Statewide recruitment efforts outlined in this bill. PSSAM appreciates the language in this bill that emphasizes the recruitment and support of

historically underrepresented candidates. Diverse school psychologists are a benefit to our diverse student population as they navigate a variety of issues, including discrimination, bias, and cultural barriers; lack of access to resources and mental health providers; mental health stigma; poverty; social media; and trauma.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** House Bill 961 and urges a favorable report.