

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 499
State Department of Education - School Psychologist Recruitment
Program

Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
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The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 499, 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.

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 train and recruit 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 Senate Bill 499.