



Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair  
Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair  
Ways and Means Committee  
Room 131 House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

March 4th, 2024

**Bill: House Bill 1401 – State Department of Education - School Psychologist Recruitment Program**

**Position: Support**

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 Maryland School Psychologists. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic well being of Maryland students, families, and communities.

School psychologists provide comprehensive psychological services to Maryland's students, including counseling, consultation, and assessment. We are acutely aware of the significant mental health needs of many of our students, and we are dedicated to helping to address those challenges. Unfortunately, the current Maryland school psychologist shortage prevents us from performing our role in a continuum of school and community based supports as envisioned by the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH).

At present, Maryland falls behind states like New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware in the number of school psychologists employed per student. In addition, Maryland's current school psychologist per student ratio of one school psychologist for every 1066 students falls far short of the National Association of School Psychologists' recommended ratio of 1 school psychologist for every 500 students. As a point of comparison, Massachusetts employs 1 school psychologist for every 686 students, and New York employs 1 school psychologist for every 629 students. As a result, school psychologists simply cannot help many of the students who need our support.

HB 1401 will help address this crisis by providing the Maryland State Department of Education with a mechanism for recruiting and supporting more school psychologists. MSPA therefore urges a favorable report of HB 1401. If we can provide any further information or be of assistance, please contact us at [legislative@mspaonline.org](mailto:legislative@mspaonline.org) or Sarah Peters at [speters@hbstrategies.us](mailto:speters@hbstrategies.us) or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,

Bradley Leposa, PHD NCSP  
Co-Chair, Legislative Committee  
Maryland School Psychologists' Association