

Key Components of SB 791/HB 883

Primary and Secondary Education - Public School Employees - Job Duties and Salaries

Sponsored by Senators Elfreth and Kramer and Delegate Feldmark

This bill seeks to take targeted steps aimed at improving the educator shortages that are impacting school systems and job types across the state. Through these limited but strategic reforms, we can better recruit and retain the outstanding educators that all of our students and schools deserve and depend on.

THE BILL WOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING IMPROVEMENTS TO BETTER SUPPORT ALL MARYLAND EDUCATORS AND SCHOOLS:

The bill would expand eligibility for all salary increases that are currently limited to **Nationally Board Certified (NBC) teachers to additional highly qualified educators**. There are many educators who have National Board Certifications but are currently not eligible for the state portion of the salary increases (\$10,000 for NBC and \$7,000 more for teaching in an identified low-performing school). This bill would expand eligibility for these increases to educators teaching in critical shortage areas like reading and math specialists, school counselors, literacy interventionists, gifted and talented specialists, and more who are important to the daily instruction and success for students. Leveling the playing field is important to making sure that highly qualified educators in these roles stay in them rather than move to NBC-eligible roles and exacerbate shortages in non-NBC-eligible roles.

The bill would expand eligibility for these salary increases to **behavioral health and other school-based student service providers who obtain highly regarded national accreditation in their profession**. School psychologists, speech pathologists, and others who work directly with students in some cases are not eligible for National Board Certification but have the ability to gain national certification from other accreditation bodies. The Maryland State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board would vet and determine what the appropriate and applicable accreditations are in each job type. Educators in these fields face often staggering caseloads and shrinking pipelines to fill these critical positions, underscoring the importance of our efforts to recruit and retain them through simple changes like this bill proposes. This would also incentivize our most experienced professionals to stay and serve students and mentor colleagues who are earlier in their careers.

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The bill would remove unworkable language concerning the career ladder requirement that assistant principals spend 20% of their time as a teacher of record and the remainder of their time engaged in other teaching activities.

Schools need assistant principals to address student discipline, serve as observers in the evaluation system, and support good teaching and strong professional growth systems. The current statute would preclude such duties being assigned to an assistant principal on the career ladder. Adding teaching duties to already overworked assistant principals while preventing them from carrying out key functions of their job is a recipe for increasing rather than addressing shortages among these important educators.

The bill would remove limitations on who can write curriculum and assessments for content areas in a district.

Currently, the statute only permits distinguished and professor distinguished teacher to be selected to write curriculum and assessment items and to develop model lessons. Given how few educators would find themselves on these rungs of the career ladder due to its relatively recent introduction, this language is not workable. If the current statute is maintained, it would lead to severely overburdening a small number of educators and burning them out extremely quickly.

Support SB 791/HB 883 to help improve educator shortages across the state.

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