

MSEA Legislative Priorities 2018

Maryland has set ambitious goals to guarantee that students are college and career ready when they graduate. Unfortunately, those standards have not been supported with adequate funding, staffing, or programs to realize this promise for all students. An independent study acknowledges that Maryland's current funding formulas are broken and underfund our schools by \$2.9 billion annually. During the 2018 legislative session, MSEA will fight for the policy and budget solutions to support world-class public schools that meet the growing and diverse needs of all students.

Since 2007, Maryland has added just 385 teachers but gained 40,500 students.

Since 2007, education support professionals (support staff, nurses, and aides) have declined by 4.3%.

National school funding experts say Maryland schools are annually underfunded by \$2.9 billion.

Educator salaries amount to 84¢ on the dollar compared to professions requiring similar education.

Building a Bridge to the Recommendations of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission)

Funding to meet growing needs: While fully funding the Thornton formula has proven to be inadequate, we must make sure political games aren't played and at least guarantee the existing formula as a funding floor. To create the schools we need, we should make progress to provide more resources to expand early childhood education, career technology education, and community schools. In the capital budget, MSEA supports expanding school construction funding to at least \$500 million, with a pathway to a \$700 million commitment, to address the billions of dollars in backlogged projects.

Creating positive and safe schools: Maryland has made progress to constrain school suspensions and promote restorative practice interventions, but more must be done to create a productive learning and working environment for everyone in our schools. Fairer and more effective discipline methods require increasing funding for special education, hiring more mental health professionals, using additional behavioral interventions, effective training for staff, implementing trauma-informed instruction, funding necessary wrap-around services, and adopting social and emotional learning standards.

Elevating respect and support for Maryland's educators: Educators devote their lives to making a difference for every single child in their community. Yet as a state, we have allowed educators to become overworked and undervalued. Maryland teachers make just 84% of what their peers in comparable professions earn. Maryland ranks last in the Mid-Atlantic when teacher salary is benchmarked against state median household income. We can make progress on salaries and set standards to ensure that education support professionals will earn a living wage. Beyond salaries, the state must address out of control class sizes and caseloads that are growing each year. Adding paraprofessionals and adopting staffing ratios for student support services will improve working and learning conditions in our schools.

Rejecting Vouchers and Public Funding of Private Schools

MSEA opposes the continuation of the BOOST voucher program. As our public schools face billions of dollars in unmet needs, it is unconscionable that public dollars are diverted to private schools. These vouchers are mostly supporting students already attending private school and have been used to subsidize private schools that discriminate against students and their families. Programs that finance aging schools, textbooks, and technology for private schools should be discontinued as well. Any private school receiving public funding must adhere to the same state policies required of public schools regarding antidiscrimination, student achievement standards, safety standards, certified teachers, employee protections, and student assessments.

Defending and Strengthening Maryland's Charter School Law

Efforts from Governor Hogan and U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos to create and advance unaccountable charter schools is the wrong policy for Maryland. Our state has the best charter school law in the nation because it strikes the right balance between local control, accountability, and innovative instruction. It should be defended and strengthened to avoid the corruption and privatization giveaways that have plagued other states.

Strengthening Workers' Rights

Guaranteeing Union Access to Workers and Worksites: Maryland has a strong track record of supporting collective bargaining and rejecting right to work schemes that would weaken unions and Maryland's middle class. As efforts at the federal level seek to diminish unions and increase inequality, Maryland should lead again by passing legislation that guarantees unions have access to workers during hiring periods. This should include access to worksites and during new employee processing.

Providing Binding Arbitration Rights for Teachers: MSEA supports legislation to give teachers the right to request an arbitration hearing—instead of a hearing with an officer hand-picked by the local school board—in suspension or termination cases. This will give teachers a much fairer discipline process, and is a right that education support professionals already have.

Supporting Coalition Efforts to Provide Earned Sick and Paid Family Leave: MSEA encourages the General Assembly to override Governor Hogan's veto of earned sick leave (the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act). Additionally, educators will work in coalition to pass paid family leave. Providing sick and paid family leave to employees helps build stronger families, healthier communities, workplaces with more productive employees, and students who are ready to learn.

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