

BILL: House Bill 81
TITLE: Community Development Administration - Live Near Where You Teach Program – Establishment
DATE: January 26, 2023
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, supports House Bill 81 to authorize the Community Development Administration (CDA) within the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to administer the Live Near Where You Teach Program (LNWYT) and a related home buyer assistance program.

MABE has consistently supported efforts by the General Assembly to assist local school systems in addressing the critical shortages of highly qualified teachers, principals, and other staff in every school and the classrooms of all students across the State. At this time, Maryland is experiencing critical shortages across all of the educational and related services professional fields; a critical shortage of the staff needed to deliver and support student learning and to administer schools as educational leaders.

This legislation appropriately includes classroom teachers, principals, school psychologists, counselors, paraprofessionals, and administrative assistants as beneficiaries of a new home buyer assistance program. This program would assist these and other full-time school staff members in securing low-interest mortgage loans, with down payment and closing cost assistance options, for the purchase of homes near where the school staff member is employed. The role of a full complement of qualified staff will be pivotal to the successful implementation of Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Passage of House Bill 81 will advance these objectives.

MABE certainly hopes that the critical shortages school systems are currently experiencing will have been remediated to a significant extent over the next several years through the initiatives in the Blueprint to address issues regarding professionalism, increases in starting salaries and certification-based raises, and innovative career ladders. Together, these reforms and investments should have a positive and lasting effect on Maryland's ability to recruit, educate, and retain the best educators in the nation.

For these reasons, MABE requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 81.