

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

INFORMATIONAL REPORT

PRESENTATION ON THE TALENT PATHWAYS UPDATE: EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL (ESP) PATHWAY PROGRAM

September 16, 2024

Background Information:

The teachers, school leaders, support staff, paraprofessionals and adults that support our students are the most important in-school factors in helping students succeed. Harford County Public Schools (HCPS), like many school districts across the country, is faced with needing to address the dual challenge of a shortage of educators generally and a lack of educator diversity. The HCPS Talent Pathways work aims to strengthen existing paths into employment – particularly teaching - in HCPS and to create new and innovative support to help us grow our own and ensure a strong, dedicated workforce in the years to come.

We are facing significant challenges in teacher recruitment, both nationally and locally. In Harford County, we are faced with a teacher shortage each year. And each year, we are filling more and more positions with conditionally certified teachers. While these teachers are vital to our district, it is in the best interest of the students - and the teachers themselves - to obtain full licensure.

To address these challenges, we need local solutions. Studies have shown that many teachers tend to work close to where they were trained and over 50% of public-school teachers work within 20 miles of their training institution. This highlights the importance of partnering with local universities to develop teacher preparation programs right here in Harford County. By creating pathways that are locally based, we not only increase the likelihood that these educators will stay and work in our schools, but we also build a workforce that is more representative of our community. These partnerships are vital to growing our own educators who are deeply committed to our students and our community.

Discussion:

This presentation provides an overview of a multi-year solution to begin to address the teacher shortage by strengthening pathways for current education support professionals seeking advancement and, in addition, expanding local university partnerships.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the Board of Education accept this informational report along with the presentation for the HCPS ESP Pathway Program and award the contract to Towson University in the amount of \$372,150.

The base term of this contract shall begin immediately and continue for three (3) years.