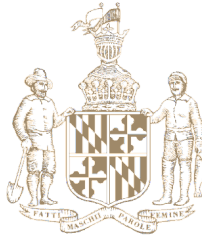


JHEANELLE WILKINS
Legislative District 20
Montgomery County

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Ways and Means Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 6, 2023

**House Bill 306 - Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports – Membership –
Alteration**

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present **House Bill 306 - Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports – Membership – Alteration**, which would alter the membership of the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports to include a school counselor certified by the State Department of Education.

The Maryland General Assembly established the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports as part of the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*. The Consortium is charged with “the development of coordinated community supports partnerships to meet student behavioral health needs.” Maryland youth are facing unprecedented behavioral health challenges. In a recent report, the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that there was a 36% increase in the number of children, between the ages of 3 and 17 years of age, with anxiety or depression in Maryland. This number just captures the reports of health care providers. We do not know the numbers for the children who do not see a provider.

The Consortium will fund vital partnerships between behavioral health providers and our schools. The Consortium is under the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission, and its work is guided by a 24-member advisory committee, which consists of almost all types of behavioral health providers and health policy advisors. However, in creating the Advisory Committee, we left out one essential profession – school counselors. School counselors are an anchor provider in schools. They provide short-term counseling, coordinate long-term support, and collaborate with families and teachers to create the best environment for students..

School counselors provide support for every student in the school. This position gives them a unique vantage point to understand the behavioral health needs of the entire student body. We need their expertise, which is why I sponsored this legislation to add a school counselor to the Consortium’s advisory committee. I urge the committee to give a **favorable report** for **House Bill 306 - Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports – Membership – Alteration**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jheanelle Wilkins".

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins