



BOND MILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ursula Golladay, Principal | ursula.golladay@pgcps.org
16001 Sherwood Avenue | Laurel, MD 20707 | 301-497-3600 | www.pgcps.org/bondmill

February 26, 2024

To whom it may concern,

Bond Mill Elementary strongly supports House Bill 1136** which will designate funding for the Youth Service Bureau (YSB) within the State's Budget. Bond Mill has been a partner with Laurel Helping Hands for more than 15 years to provide resources for both our parents and our students. Laurel Helping Hands provides important mental health services, in particular family counseling services to assist youth and their families.

Laurel Helping Hands provides effective services to our community and is able to be responsive to local needs that arise. Laurel Helping Hands offers families a safe place to address difficult issues such as truancy, violence, trauma, bullying, depression and suicidal ideation. In addition, the program offers resources for parents and family needs as well as support for the schools to address individuals, to ensure youth are successful. Designating funding for Youth Service bureaus will guarantee that families in our communities can count on these programs in times of need. Youth Service Bureaus are mandated in state law to serve youth and families by providing group and family counseling, information and referral services, crisis intervention including suicide assessments, and substance use assessments and referrals. Designated funding for Youth Service bureaus makes sense to ensure that the State continues to have a network of programs providing these services.

HB 1136 would increase the prevention and intervention services desperately needed to address growing youth mental health needs in our young people. A quarter of Maryland's children and adolescents have one or more diagnosed emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions. And an alarming 13% of children and adolescents report having anxiety or depression.

The funding this bill provides would increase services desperately needed to address spiking incidents of juvenile crime, and help to make sure that the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2022 is successful by providing community based programs for youth. The services are proven to work in keeping young people out of the criminal justice system, with Youth Services Bureaus consistently having a 95% success rate in diverting youth from juvenile services.

I respectfully request that you support HB 1136 to designate funding for Youth Service Bureau by voting in favor of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Ursula Golladay
Principal and
Sue Righter, School Nurse