Committee(s):	**House Ways and Means**
Bill Number:	**House Bill 1394 Education – Provision of 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and Safe Schools Maryland Telephone Numbers**
Hearing Date:	**March 6, 2024**
Position:	**Support**

The Maryland School Counselor Association (MSCA) supports *House Bill 1394 Education – Provision of 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and Safe Schools Maryland Telephone Numbers*, which requires beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, each county board of education to provide students in grades six through twelve with the telephone numbers of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and the Safe Schools Maryland anonymous tip line by printing the telephone numbers prominently in the school handbook and printing the telephone numbers on a student's school identification card, if provided. We represent school counselors who support the health and wellbeing of all children in elementary, middle, and high schools in Maryland public schools.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is part of a comprehensive strategy to ensure families and children can access behavioral health services in a crisis or to prevent a crisis. Individuals can call 988 any time during the day, including after hours, to connect to behavioral health services and other support programs in their area. While the anonymous tip line and reporting system— Safe Schools Maryland, allows students, parents, and community members to report school or student safety concerns anywhere easily and anonymously in Maryland. Tips received are routed to school, public safety, health, and/or social services personnel to follow-up.

We ask the Committee for a **favorable report** on this legislation. The requirements to make both the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and the Safe Schools Maryland anonymous tip line phone numbers readily accessible in the school handbook and on a student's school identification card is valuable to protect student's safety. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Jocelyn I. Collins at jcollins@policypartners.net.