

FAVORABLE
House Bill 612
Public Schools – Lifesaver Schools Program – Establishment

House Ways and Means Committee
February 12, 2025

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The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 612, which would establish the Lifesaver Schools Program to recognize public schools that provide health and safety training to students and school personnel. It would also require the State Department of Education to adopt certain criteria for designation as a Lifesaver School that at a minimum require public schools to offer to students and school personnel evidence-based training on CPR and first aid and a mental health wellness program or a peer mentoring program.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

The Lifesaver Schools Program provides an incentive for schools to offer resources that support the physical safety and mental wellbeing of students and educators. The bill's requirements for a Lifesaver School include offering to school personnel a mental health wellness program, training in CPR, or training in first aid. Though certainly not a replacement for school-based clinicians, counselors, psychologists, and other behavioral health staff, any of these offerings would be a valuable resource to educators. Training would be best implemented as paid, job-embedded, or credit-eligible professional development options to promote broad participation without compromising staff workload.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 612.