



**HB 824 – Public Schools – Cyber Safety Guide and Training Course –  
Development, Implementation and Reporting**

**House Ways and Means Committee**

**Date: February 12, 2021**

**POSITION: Favorable**

**The Maryland Coalition of Families:** Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) helps families who care for someone with behavioral health needs. Using personal experience as parents, caregivers and other loved ones, our staff provide one-to-one peer support and navigation services to parents and caregivers of young people with mental health issues and to any loved one who cares for someone with a substance use or gambling issue.

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MCF strongly supports HB 824

We know that children can experience significant behavioral health issues as the result of cyber usage. Studies have shown that cyber-bullying is a significant problem that can result in anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. Also, they have shown that the overuse of social media can contribute to depression in youth. Moreover, there are web sites and posts that promote and provide how-to information about self-harm, suicide, eating disorders, and more.

Children and youth need to receive information about the potential dangers of cyber usage and how to engage in responsible use. Families and educators too need to know about the potential threats, and receive training on how to promote cyber safety.

Schools are the logical place to provide students with training on cyber safety, and for conveying such information to families and educators.

Legislation such as HB 824 is long overdue. Therefore we urge a favorable report.

**Contact: Ann Geddes**  
**Director of Public Policy**  
**The Maryland Coalition of Families**  
**10632 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 234**  
**Columbia, Maryland 21044**  
**Phone: 443-741-8668**  
[ageddes@mdcoalition.org](mailto:ageddes@mdcoalition.org)