



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
House Bill 657:
Public Schools – Standardized Behavioral Health Screenings for Students –
Development and Implementation**

OFFERED ON BEHALF OF
The Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities
(MANSEF)

**BEFORE THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
February 24, 2022**

The Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities (MANSEF) has 70 nonpublic special education schools across Maryland. We currently serve approximately 3800 publicly funded school children and employ over 1200 teachers, clinicians, and administrators. MANSEF offers our support of House Bill 657.

The Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports was established to (1) Support the development of coordinated community supports to meet student behavioral health needs and other related challenges in a holistic, nonstigmatized, and coordinated manner; (2) Provide expertise for the development of best practices in the delivery of student behavioral health services, supports, and wraparound services; and (3) Provide technical assistance to local school systems to support positive classroom environments.

The development of standardized behavioral health guidelines will provide a valuable framework to ensure the State is meeting the needs of all students. A uniform measurement will help the State address where to place the resources and provide the early intervention where necessary to identify students most in need.

The inclusion of MANSEF as one of the stakeholders in the development of the guidelines is important as we have a wealth of expertise in serving students with behavioral health challenges. ***We work in partnership with the local public***

school systems in serving the most challenged students. We have a national expert, Abby Potter, who consults with the MANSEF schools on the implementation of positive behavioral intervention strategies and supports (PBIS). In addition, we employ a comparatively high number of clinicians, who are experts in trauma-informed strategies. PBIS refers to the school-wide and individual application of data-driven, trauma-informed actions, instruction, and assistance to promote positive social and emotional growth while preventing or reducing challenging behaviors to encourage educational and social emotional success. PBIS has become the gold-standard intervention and strategy for providing a comprehensive support system for, not just special needs students, but for all students.

The pandemic has placed a laser-focus on the emotional and mental health of students, and we pride ourselves on addressing the needs of our students in a therapeutic environment where they can succeed.

If you require further information please contact Dorie Flynn, Executive Director at 410-938-4413 or mansef@aol.com.