



Bill: **House Bill 375 - Education - Coaches - Mental Health First Aid Training**

Position: **Support**

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state.

We are writing in support of House Bill 375 - Education - Coaches - Mental Health First Aid Training. Mental Health First Aid is a program used internationally to teach the necessary skills to recognize mental health challenges in youth and adults, and connect those individuals to appropriate services. Specifically, the Youth Mental Health First Aid curriculum teaches adults who work directly with youth to respond to mental health challenges in both crisis and non-crisis situations. The curriculum teaches a structured model that is designed to be used by adults with no formal mental health training. Coaches are uniquely situated in our schools and act not only as athletic coaches, but also mentors, advisors, and trusted adult. Because of their proximity to students, they are the ideal candidates to receive this training, which will support the mental health needs of our students.

For these reasons, we are strongly in support of HB375 and urge a favorable report. If we can provide any further information or be of assistance, please contact us at legislative@mSPAonline.org or Sarah Peters at speters@hbstrategies.us or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Phipps, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP
Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association