



HB375 EDUCATION – COACHES – MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING

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EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB375 Education – Coaches – Mental Health Training**. This bill requires each public school in the state that offers a mainstream athletic program to provide specified mental health training to each participating coach. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must work in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), each local board of education, and the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) to develop guidelines for public schools to train coaches in recognizing the indicators of mental illness and behavioral distress in students, including depression, trauma, violence, youth suicide, and substance abuse.

While AACPS supports steps that elevate mental health awareness in athletics and believes that coaches are a key component in supporting the mental health of student-athletes, AACPS opposes legislation which creates unfunded mandates. This bill would require AACPS to implement the guidelines developed by MSDE, MDH, and MPSSAA in collaboration with local boards of education for training coaches in recognizing the indicators of mental illness and behavioral distress in students. AACPS anticipates that significant funding will be needed in order to provide this additional training to public school coaches on mental illness and behavioral distress required by this bill. Given that this bill creates an unfunded mandate for local school systems, AACPS opposes HB375.

Furthermore, AACPS believes that this additional training for coaches is unnecessary given the mandate of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint) to enhance student health services. Specifically, the requirement of pillar four, objective five of the Blueprint to ensure that student behavioral health needs are identified, and all students have access to behavioral health services through school-based or community-based services. As part of enhancing student health services, the Blueprint requires that local school systems provide the behavioral health training to certificated school personnel who have direct contact regularly with students and develop and implement a standardized screening to identify students with behavioral health service needs using an evidence-based approach. AACPS believes that student behavioral health needs will be adequately addressed through the implementation of the standardized screening, training for certificated staff, and development of enhanced student health services in both school and the community.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on **HB375**.