



**Committee:** House Ways and Means Committee

**Bill Number:** Senate Bill 266 - Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports – Membership – Alteration

**Hearing Date:** March 29, 2023

**Position:** Favorable

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The Maryland School Counselors Association (MSCA) supports Senate Bill 266 – *Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports*. The bill adds a seat for school counselors on the advisory committee to the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports.

School counselors provide support for *every* student in the school. This position gives us a unique vantage point to understand the behavioral health needs of the entire student body. We provide short-term counseling services and make referrals to other providers, both in the school and community, when more one-on-one counseling is needed.

We want to contribute our expertise to the vital work of the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports, but there is no seat in which we could serve. We think our input can help the Consortium be successful. School counselors will be integrally involved in implementing the Consortium’s initiatives across the state at the individual school level.

The Accountability Implementation Board (AIB) recognizes the importance of the school counselors in the Consortium’s work. In its December 2022 report, AIB flagged that “(r)epresentation of school counselors on the Consortium” is among the issues that AIB will monitor and “may affect the Blueprint’s implementation and success in realizing its expected outcomes.”<sup>1</sup>

The Consortium’s work is critical as Maryland schools are facing a behavioral health crisis. The Annie E. Casey Foundation found that there has been a 36% increase in the number of children, between the ages of 3 and 17 years of age, with anxiety or depression in Maryland using 2020 data.<sup>2</sup> We are committed to supporting the Consortium in reversing this trend.

We ask for a favorable report. We thank the sponsor and the Committee for all of your work in supporting Maryland’s students. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).

<sup>1</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/18fuoxFa2QCIRcYtOyilt4m87-HavBVtJ/view>

<sup>2</sup> <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2022kidscountdatabook-2022.pdf>