



SB165 – 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 **SB165 – Education – Coaches – Mental Health Training**. This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), each county board, and the Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association (MPSSAA) to develop guidelines for public schools to train coaches to recognize indicators of mental illness and behavioral distress in students, including depression, trauma, 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, we oppose legislation such as this which will result in an unfunded mandate to the school system. AACPS anticipates that significant funding will be needed to provide this additional training to public school coaches on mental health and behavioral distress required by this bill.

Furthermore, AACPS believes that this additional training for coaches is unnecessary given the mandates of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint) to enhance student health services. Specifically, the requirement of pillar four, objective five of the Blueprint is to ensure that student behavioral health needs are identified, and all students have access to behavioral health services through the school-based or community-based services. As part of enhancing student services, the Blueprint requires that local school systems provide 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 the student behavioral health needs will be adequately addressed through the implementation of the standardized screening, training for certificated staff, and development of student health services in both school and the community.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on SB165.