



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Bill Number: Senate Bill 704 – State Department of Education and Department of Information Technology – Evaluation on Artificial Intelligence in Public Schools

Hearing Date: February 21, 2025

Position: Support

The Maryland School Counselor Association (MSCA), representing over 900 school counselors serving students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade in public, private, charter, and magnet schools, strongly supports SB 704.

SB 704 would require the State Department of Education to conduct an evaluation on the use and potential use of artificial intelligence (AI) in public schools. It would also require that the evaluation consist of a survey of local school systems and review of available AI to assist with student learning, require the Department of Information Technology to assist the State Department of Education in performing its review, and require the Department to issue a final report on the results of the evaluation by December 15, 2026.

MSCA believes that studying AI's role in public education is essential, as it has the potential to revolutionize learning by providing personalized educational experiences, assisting educators with administrative tasks, offering real-time feedback to students, and increasing accessibility. However, AI also presents challenges, including concerns about equity, algorithmic bias, and the appropriate extent of AI integration in classrooms. A careful, state-level policy approach is necessary to ensure its responsible implementation and maximize benefits for all students.

AI's ability to process vast amounts of data and generate personalized insights makes it a valuable tool for enhancing school counseling. By analyzing students' interests and aptitudes, AI can facilitate more meaningful student-counselor interactions and support effective goal setting. Additionally, AI can break down complex tasks into manageable steps, streamlining career and academic planning—an often time-intensive process for human counselors.

By integrating AI into counseling services, counselors can allocate more time to providing essential social and emotional support, fostering stronger mentorship relationships, and addressing students' unique needs. AI-powered tools can also track student progress, refine recommendations, and stay updated on evolving job market trends, equipping counselors with cutting-edge guidance for students' future opportunities.

Furthermore, AI can offer real-time, context-specific suggestions for coursework, local internships, and career pathways that adapt to students' changing interests.

As schools navigate budget constraints and rising absenteeism, leveraging AI in counseling services presents an opportunity to enhance support systems and optimize student engagement. However, this must be approached thoughtfully. Human counselors play an irreplaceable role in helping students explore their identities, interests, and post-secondary options. By thoughtfully integrating AI with human expertise, counseling services can evolve to meet students' diverse needs in a more personalized, engaging, and goal-oriented manner.

For these reasons, MSCA urges a favorable committee report on SB 704. For further information, please contact Jocelyn I. Collins at jcollins@policypartners.net.