

TO: Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and Environment

BILL: Senate Bill (SB) 350 – *Primary and Secondary Education – Educator Professional Development – Course on Student Well-Being and Flourishing*

Date: February 12, 2025

Position: Information

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing this information regarding **Senate Bill (SB) 350 – *Primary and Secondary Education – Educator Professional Development – Course on Student Well-Being and Flourishing*** which requires MSDE to develop a comprehensive plan by July 1, 2026, for the establishment of Restorative Practices Schools.

SB 350 Summary

SB 350 mandates the Maryland State Department of Education to create and deliver a continuing professional development course on student well-being by July 1, 2026. This course, available asynchronously to all school personnel and administrators, will focus on eight dimensions of well-being as defined by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Information

The proposed course will cover social, environmental, physical, emotional, spiritual, occupational, intellectual, and financial well-being, emphasizing pedagogical approaches to enhance student flourishing in each area.

Developing the course described in this bill will require the allocation of resources, including personnel time and potentially funding for curriculum development. The course must address the eight dimensions of well-being identified by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Based on the development of an online course to address student behavioral intervention, MSDE estimates that a minimum of 1,500 staff hours will be needed to develop the course and will require the participation of several units within MSDE including student services staff, the Maryland School Mental Health Response Team, the Division of Teaching and Learning, the Digital Learning and School Library/Media Branch, and information technology support to ensure accessibility standards are met.

The course must be made available to all school personnel and administrators through asynchronous instruction. The Department currently has a learning management system and the necessary online infrastructure to host and deliver the course.

The bill does not specify whether existing personnel will deliver the course, or if new personnel need to be hired. If existing staff are used to develop and facilitate the course, it will require re-allocation of their workload. If new personnel are hired, that will incur an increased financial burden on the Department. MSDE will need to ensure the course content is updated as needed, and that the online platform is operating efficiently. These activities will also have fiscal and operational impacts.

MSDE estimates that the scope of this project would require at least one full-time Education Program Specialist to implement SB 350. The Specialist would research similar existing programs in other states, consult with SAMHSA, and work with colleagues in MSDE's Office of Professional Learning to develop the curriculum, lesson plans, and activities. Model units would be tested and reviewed. The Specialist will manage requirements for the course to provide continuing education credit.

MSDE respectfully requests consideration of these comments as SB 350 is discussed and deliberated.

For further information, please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne (Executive Director of Government Affairs) at 410-767-0504, or Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov