

# **MLU Support Letter - SB350.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Position: FAV

**February 10, 2025**

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman  
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Maryland General Assembly  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Support for Senate Bill 350 – Primary and Secondary Education – Educator Professional Development – Course on Student Well-Being and Flourishing**

Dear Chair Feldman and Esteemed Committee Members,

At Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), we believe that education is the cornerstone of opportunity, and the well-being of our students is essential to their success. Senate Bill 350, which focuses on creating a professional development course for educators centered on student well-being and flourishing, is an essential step toward nurturing healthier, more resilient students.

Every day, we witness the challenges our students face—pressures at home, cultural disconnects, and mental health struggles that often go unaddressed. For Latino and immigrant students, these challenges are compounded by systemic barriers that make it difficult to access adequate mental health support. SB350 provides a vital framework for equipping educators with the tools they need to recognize and respond to the social, emotional, and mental health needs of their students.

By investing in this type of professional development, we aren't just giving teachers more training; we're transforming classrooms into spaces where students feel seen, understood, and supported. For many students, having a trusted, informed adult who knows how to respond to their struggles can make the difference between staying in school and dropping out. This is especially critical for underserved communities where resources may be limited, but the need for support is immense.

A focus on well-being and flourishing is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Students who are emotionally and mentally well are more engaged, more likely to succeed academically, and better prepared for the future. This bill ensures that our educators have the tools to meet the needs of every child, regardless of background or circumstance.

We strongly urge the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report on SB350. Together, we can create a school environment where every student has the opportunity to flourish and thrive.

Sincerely,  
Carlos Orbe, Jr.  
Communications and Public Affairs Specialist  
Maryland Latinos Unidos  
[corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org](mailto:corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org)

# **SB350\_MSEA\_Lamb\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lauren Lamb

Position: FAV

**FAVORABLE**  
**Senate Bill 350**  
**Primary and Secondary Education – Educator Professional Development – Course on**  
**Student Well-Being and Flourishing**

**Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment**  
**February 12, 2025**

**Lauren Lamb**  
**Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 350, which would require the State Department of Education to offer a continuing professional development course on student well-being and flourishing to school personnel and administrators.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

As public school educators, we are committed to career-long learning about how to best serve our students. High-quality, research-based professional development can improve our pedagogy and classroom environments. Understanding child development and how to support students' social-emotional learning helps educators support the whole child.

The course offered under this bill is based on the eight dimensions of wellness identified by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), including social, emotional, intellectual, and physical wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> This would be a valuable option for educators seeking a holistic understanding of what students need to learn and thrive. We also appreciate that this training would be eligible for the Professional Development Points (PDPs) that educators earn toward maintenance of their licenses. **We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 350.**

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<sup>1</sup> Promoting Wellness: A Guide to Community Action. SAMHSA (2016).

<https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4957.pdf>

# **FreeState\_Justice\_SB0350\_FAVORABLE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ronnie Taylor

Position: FAV



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Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Monday, February 10, 2025**

SB350 – Primary and Secondary Education - Educator Professional  
Development - Course on Student Well-Being and Flourishing

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Esteemed Members of the Education,  
Energy, and the Environment:

My name is Ronnie L. Taylor, and I serve as the Community Advocacy  
Manager at FreeState Justice, a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing  
legal and systemic inequities affecting Maryland's LGBTQIA+ community. I  
advocate in strong support of **SB0350**, which mandates the development of a  
professional development course on student well-being and flourishing for  
educators.

**SB0350** addresses a critical need in our education system by equipping school  
personnel with the tools to support the comprehensive well-being of all  
students, including those from marginalized communities. Data indicates that  
LGBTQIA+ students in Maryland face significant challenges:

- Approximately 50% of LGBTQ+ students in Maryland report being verbally harassed due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 52% of LGBTQ youth in Maryland who sought mental health care in the past year were unable to access it.

These statistics underscore the urgency of implementing comprehensive well-being programs in schools.

**SB0350** requires the Maryland State Department of Education to develop a continuing professional development course focusing on the eight dimensions of well-being as identified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): social, environmental, physical, emotional, spiritual, occupational, intellectual, and financial.

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By educating school personnel on these dimensions, the bill aims to:


1. **Enhance Social Well-Being:** Foster inclusive classroom environments where all students feel a sense of belonging.
2. **Promote Emotional Well-Being:** Equip educators with strategies to support students in expressing their feelings and coping with stressors.
3. **Support Physical Well-Being:** Encourage healthy habits through informed pedagogical approaches.
4. **Cultivate Intellectual Well-Being:** Stimulate lifelong learning and personal interests among students.

Implementing this course will empower educators to create supportive learning environments, thereby improving educational outcomes for LGBTQIA+ students and others facing adversity.

In my role at FreeState Justice, I have encountered numerous LGBTQIA+ students who face discrimination and a lack of support within educational settings. For instance, many students have reported feeling unsafe at school due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, leading to increased absenteeism and declining academic performance.

I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report for **SB0350**. This legislation is a vital step toward fostering an educational environment that prioritizes the well-being of all students, particularly those from marginalized communities. By equipping educators with the necessary tools and knowledge, we can ensure that every student in Maryland can thrive.

Best,



Ronnie L. Taylor

**Sources:**

1. [Recommendations-to-Support-LGBTQIA-Students-APPROVED.pdf](#)
2. [The-Trevor-Project-2022-National-Survey-on-LGBTQ-Youth-Mental-Health-by-State-Maryland.pdf](#)
3. [Creating a Healthier Life: A Step-By-Step Guide to Wellness | SAMHSA Publications and Digital Products](#)

## **SB 350.pdf**

Uploaded by: Taylor Dickerson

Position: FAV





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February 10, 2025

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Taylor Dickerson

Senator Brian J. Feldman  
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB0350- Primary and Secondary Education – Educator Professional Development – Course on Student Well-Being and Flourishing

Position: SUPPORT/SB0350

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists throughout the state, asks the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to report FAVORABLY on SB0350. We support the intent of this bill, which is to provide primary and secondary educators to the importance of considering the well-being of the “whole” student to educational success. Providing educators with the opportunity to gain valuable information about a variety of factors that contribute to the ability of individual students to flourish while learning is long overdue. It has long been known that the factors outlined in this legislation are as important as the curriculum being taught to a student’s ability to absorb and utilize the academic information to which they are exposed in the classroom. Our hope is that by exposure to this information educators can better understand the factors that lead to academic success, many of which are beyond educator’s immediate control. By sensitizing educational staff to these factors and/or affirming what they might already know, we would hope that it would allow them to create flexible learning environments and accommodate students who are struggling in an increasingly complex world. We well know that creating empathetic relationships with those we serve is the key to affecting positive change in their behavior, which in this case is learning. We would hope that educational staff might be sensitized to issues affecting student behavior and learning that can be better addressed as a result of the insight a course of this nature might provide them.

Thank you for considering our comments on SB0350. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at [mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,

*David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.*  
David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.  
President

*Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.*  
Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.  
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association  
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs

## **SB0350- State Board- LOI.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tara Phillips

Position: INFO

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

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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](mailto:Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov)