

# **Employ Prince George's - HB 772 Testimony - FAV.pd**

Uploaded by: Ardy Kamali

Position: FAV



EMPLOY PRINCE GEORGE'S  
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www.employpg.org  
(301) 618-8400

*Walter L. Simmons, President*

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**Bill Number:** House Bill 772  
**Title:** Education – Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students  
– Alterations  
**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**Hearing Date:** April 2, 2025  
**Position:** FAVORABLE

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Employ Prince George’s, Inc. (EPG) is the principal workforce development entity for the Prince George’s County Government, and the staff, fiscal agent, and career services provider for the Prince George’s County Workforce Development Board. Employ Prince George’s is responsible for regulating policy development, operating the Prince George’s County Public Workforce System, and administering all workforce activities related to compliance and workforce development services funded by the Prince George’s County Government and the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA).

When the General Assembly passed the landmark Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, it recognized that preparing students for career success required collaboration between county boards of education, community colleges, and local workforce development boards. As such, the Blueprint mandated that school systems partner with these entities to provide career counseling services and provided a per-pupil funding benchmark (\$62, adjusted annually for inflation) through Fiscal Year 2026 to support this critical initiative.

Unfortunately, school systems across the state—under guidance from the Public School Superintendents’ Association of Maryland (PSSAM)—have willfully misinterpreted this funding mechanism as a temporary “pilot” program, despite no such language appearing in Maryland law or in guidance from the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB). This mischaracterization has undermined the General Assembly’s intent and jeopardized the success of the Career Counseling Program.

Prince George’s County provides a glaring example of how school systems have resisted this legislative mandate. From the outset of Blueprint implementation, Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) failed to prioritize Career Counseling under the Blueprint, delayed EPG’s access to schools for over 12 months, and failed to make mandatory Blueprint payments that fund the salaries of career coaches and career counseling programs for PGCPS students. These actions ultimately required an AIB-appointed facilitator to intervene, assist EPG to enter local middle and high schools, and mandate that PGCPS make the required payments owed to EPG. These actions demonstrate a blatant disregard for both the law and students who rely on critical workforce development services.

House Bill 772 is necessary to prevent school systems from further undermining the Career Counseling Program by clarifying that funding for this program beyond FY26 will continue at the current rate through the foundation per-pupil amount. Without this statutory clarity, workforce development boards across Maryland will face devastating staff reductions, including the loss of over 60 career counseling staff in Prince George's County alone.

Without a clear funding amount for the Career Counseling Program, school systems will be free to reduce spending to \$1 per-pupil and implement their own version of career counseling, ignoring the intent of the General Assembly and diminishing the impact of this initiative. The idea that school systems alone are better suited to provide career counseling is fundamentally flawed. Workforce development boards play a unique and essential role in career readiness that school systems simply cannot replicate:

- 1. Data-Driven Decision Making:** Workforce boards maintain extensive labor market information and industry data to align career counseling with real job opportunities and local career pathways. School systems do not have this expertise.
- 2. Employer Connections:** Workforce boards have established relationships with local businesses, ensuring that students gain direct access to potential employers, mentors, and community leaders. School systems do not have these employer relationships and networks.
- 3. Career Pathway Tracking:** Workforce boards track individuals beyond high school graduation, providing long-term career pathway support. School systems do not have the infrastructure or desire to do this.
- 4. Job Placement and Hiring Events:** Workforce boards regularly host job fairs and hiring events that connect students to immediate employment opportunities. School systems lack the capacity to do so.

For these reasons, House Bill 772 is not just necessary—it is urgent. Without legislative intervention, school systems will continue to disregard the General Assembly's original intent, effectively dismantling a program that has already provided invaluable career support to students across Maryland.

We respectfully urge the committee to report favorably on House Bill 772 to ensure the Blueprint Career Counseling Program remains a stable, well-funded, and integral part of Maryland's workforce pipeline.

# **Brian Lynch - Letter Support for HB 772 .pdf**

Uploaded by: Brian Lynch

Position: FAV

Brian Lynch  
Local Board Chair  
Anne Arundel County Local Workforce Development Board  
613 Global Way, Linthicum, MD 21090  
brian.lynch@umm.edu  
March 31, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair  
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
110 College Ave  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Support for House Bill 772

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Anne Arundel County Local Workforce Development Board local workforce I am writing to strongly urge your support for **House Bill 772**, which continues career counseling services led by Maryland's local workforce development boards. As you know, Maryland's local workforce boards and their partners at the state's community colleges and local education agencies are providing career counseling services to Maryland's middle and high school students in accordance with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

This model is already demonstrating success in Maryland and is gaining national recognition as a best practice. As you know, Maryland's local workforce development boards are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between education and employment. Through direct partnerships with businesses, educators, and community organizations, we provide real-time labor market insights and direct employer connections, ensuring that students and job seekers receive career counseling aligned with actual workforce needs.

This approach is already making a significant impact:

- Over 200 workforce professionals have been dispatched to middle and high schools throughout Maryland to support career counseling.
- In just the first year, more than 190,000 students were reached through workforce-led career guidance, helping them explore pathways into high-demand careers.
- States across the country are looking to Maryland as a model for how workforce boards can enhance career counseling and strengthen talent pipeline development.

In Anne Arundel County we have brought on 39 Career Coaches who are working in all middle

schools, high schools, and charter schools to provide career exposure, awareness, and preparation. To date we have seen students make better connections between what they are learning in class with future careers and build connections with careers through interactions with local businesses. It is not just the local board that is seeing the results, we are hearing great feedback from school admin who work with our Career Coaches every day. When asked about the impact of the program, one Assistant Principal at Southern Middle School said “The guidance and inspiration [Mr. Rice] provides at such a formative time in their lives are truly invaluable. Mr. Rice is shaping not only their careers but also their confidence and sense of Purpose.”

House Bill 772 continues the work of the workforce development boards and their partners in career counseling, ensuring that every student in Maryland has access to the knowledge and resources necessary to make informed career decisions. This legislation is not just about guidance—it’s about equipping Maryland’s future workforce with clear, attainable pathways to good-paying, in-demand jobs.

We respectfully ask for your **support in advancing House Bill 772** to ensure that Maryland continues leading the way in workforce-aligned career counseling. Thank you for your time and Consideration.

Sincerely,

**Brian Lynch**

Local Board Chair

Anne Arundel County Local Workforce Development Board

# **Cindy Rauner - Senate Support Letter for HB 772 .**

Uploaded by: Cindy Rauner

Position: FAV

Cindy Rauner  
St. Vice President of Human Resources & CHRO  
Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board Chair  
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative  
P.O. Box 1937  
Hughesville, MD 20637  
Cindy.Rauner@SMECO.coop  
February 21, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair  
House Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
110 College Ave,  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Support for House Bill 772

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board, I am writing to strongly urge your support for House Bill 772, which continues career counseling services led by Maryland's local workforce development boards. As you know, Maryland's local workforce boards and their partners at the state's community colleges and local education agencies are providing career counseling services to Maryland's middle and high school students in accordance with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

This model is already demonstrating success in Maryland and is gaining national recognition as a best practice. As you know, Maryland's local workforce development boards are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between education and employment. Through direct partnerships with businesses, educators, and community organizations, we provide real-time labor market insights and direct employer connections, ensuring that students and job seekers receive career counseling aligned with actual workforce needs.

This approach is already making a significant impact:

- Over 200 workforce professionals have been dispatched to middle and high schools throughout Maryland to support career counseling.
- In just the first year, more than 190,000 students were reached through workforce-led career guidance, helping them explore pathways into high-demand careers.

- States across the country are looking to Maryland as a model for how workforce boards can enhance career counseling and strengthening talent pipeline development.

House Bill 772 continues the work of the workforce development boards and their partners in career counseling, ensuring that every student in Maryland has access to the knowledge and resources necessary to make informed career decisions. This legislation is not just about guidance—it's about equipping Maryland's future workforce with clear, attainable pathways to good-paying, in-demand jobs.

We respectfully ask for your support in advancing House Bill 772 to ensure that Maryland continues leading the way in workforce-aligned career counseling. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cindy Rauner,  
Sr. Vice President of Human Resources & CHRO,  
Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board

**Anne Arundel County\_FAV\_HB 772\_EEE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ethan Hunt

Position: FAV

April 2, 2025

**House Bill 772**

**Education - Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students -  
Alterations**

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 772 – Education - Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students - Alterations. This Bill formalizes the essential role that Maryland’s local workforce development boards play in career counseling for students and job seekers.

In Anne Arundel County, we have seen the tremendous value of this approach firsthand through the collaborative efforts of the Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC), Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS), and Anne Arundel Community College (AACC). Together, these partners have built a robust, locally aligned career counseling model that helps our residents make informed decisions about their education, training, and career paths. The impact is clear:

- AAWDC has embedded career coaches in middle and high schools, helping students explore high-demand career pathways and connect with opportunities to better prepare them for their future careers.
- AACPS has embraced workforce-aligned career advising, integrating career coaches in all schools and supporting the development of an innovative program that supports student success.
- AACC provides seamless transitions into dual enrollment programs, ensuring students can pursue in-demand credentials and degrees.

House Bill 772 builds on this momentum, providing a clear structure for continued collaboration between local education systems, workforce boards, and higher education institutions. It ensures that students across Maryland—regardless of zip code—have access to relevant, actionable career guidance that connects them to real opportunities in our communities.

Anne Arundel County is proud to be part of a model that is quickly gaining national attention. This Bill ensures that Maryland continues to lead in preparing our future workforce through coordinated, employer-informed career counseling. For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 772.



Steuart Pittman  
County Executive

**HB 772 Support -Senate EEE Support Letter MWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kirkland Murray

Position: FAV

## **MWA Members**

**Anne Arundel County**  
Anne Arundel Workforce  
Development Corporation  
*Kirkland Murray, Executive Director*

**Baltimore City**  
Mayor's Office of Employment  
Development  
*MacKenzie Garvin, Director*

**Baltimore County**  
Baltimore County Department of  
Economic and Workforce  
Development  
*Jonathan Sachs, Director*

**Carroll County**  
Carroll County Workforce  
Development  
*Heather Lee Powell, Manager*

**Frederick County**  
Frederick County Workforce  
Services  
*Michelle Day, Director*

**Howard County**  
Howard County Office of Workforce  
Development  
*Stephanie Adibe, Director*

**Lower Shore**  
Lower Shore Workforce Alliance  
(Somerset, Wicomico, & Worcester,  
Counties)  
*Leslie Porter-Cabell, Workforce  
Director*

**Montgomery County**  
WorkSource Montgomery, Inc.  
*Anthony Featherstone, Executive  
Director*

**Prince George's County**  
Prince George's County Workforce  
Development Board  
*Walter Simmons, Executive  
Director*

**Southern Maryland**  
Southern Maryland Job Source  
(Calvert, Charles, & St. Mary's  
Counties)  
*Ruthy Davis, Director*

**Susquehanna Region**  
Susquehanna Workforce Network,  
Inc. (Cecil & Harford Counties)  
*Kimberly Justus, Executive Director*

**Upper Shore**  
Upper Shore Workforce Investment  
Board (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent,  
Queen Anne's, & Talbot Counties)  
*Dan McDermott, Interim Executive  
Director*

**Western Maryland**  
Western Maryland Consortium  
(Allegany, Garrett &  
Washington Counties)  
*Amos McCoy, Interim Executive  
Director*

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

## **Subject: Support for House Bill 772**

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chari Kagan and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland Workforce Association (MWA), representing the state's thirteen local workforce development boards, we are writing to express our strong support for House Bill 772. This legislation is essential to strengthening Maryland's career counseling system by integrating workforce development boards into the career guidance process—a proven model that is gaining national recognition.

Local workforce development boards serve as key connectors between education and industry, ensuring that career counseling is informed by real-time labor market data, employer needs, and in-demand career pathways. By continuing this partnership, House Bill 772 will enhance career readiness and workforce alignment across the state.

The impact of this approach is already evident:

Over 200 workforce professionals have been dispatched to middle and high schools across Maryland to provide career guidance.

More than 190,000 students have been reached in just the first year, providing them with valuable insights into career pathways, apprenticeships, and training opportunities.

Maryland is leading the way, with other states looking to replicate this workforce-driven career counseling model.

By continuing and strengthening the partnerships between workforce boards, schools, and businesses, House Bill 772 will ensure that students and job seekers receive career guidance tailored to workforce needs, ultimately strengthening Maryland's economy and closing skills gaps in high-growth industries.

The Maryland Workforce Association urges your support for House Bill 772 to sustain and expand this initiative. Thank you for your leadership in ensuring that Maryland continues to lead the nation in innovative workforce solutions. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss the positive outcomes this legislation will create.

Sincerely,

Kirkland Murray, President  
Maryland Workforce Association

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WORK & THE ECONOMY

## COMMENTARY

# Let's strengthen career readiness for students across Maryland together



**KIRKLAND MURRAY**



**BRANDON BUTLER**

MARCH 27, 2025 4:39 AM





📷 A vocational school student practices welding in this file photo. (Photo by Senior Airman Nichelle Anderson/U.S. Air Force)

As Maryland continues to adapt to a rapidly changing job market, we must equip our students with the tools they need to succeed. House Bill 772, currently before the Maryland General Assembly, presents an opportunity to strengthen career readiness for middle and high school students by ensuring dedicated funding for the Career Counseling Program, a program established nearly two years ago through Pillar 3 of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

As representatives of the Maryland Workforce Association, we strongly support this bill and urge

legislators to pass it without delay.

Too many students graduate without a clear plan for their future, unsure of what careers align with their skills and interests. Many are unaware of the diverse job opportunities available in their home counties and in Maryland, including those in high-demand fields like health care, information technology and skilled trades. Without proper career guidance, students may end up underemployed or disengaged from the workforce altogether.

At the same time, Maryland faces a growing skills gap. Employers are struggling to find qualified workers, and many high-paying jobs go unfilled simply because young people are not aware of these career paths. Early exposure to career options and individualized counseling can bridge this gap, ensuring that students make informed decisions about their futures while strengthening our state's workforce.

**HB 772** will ensure that local workforce development boards continue to receive dedicated funding to support the Career Counseling Program in schools. If passed, the bill requires county boards of education to

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opinion  
matters**

Maryland  
Matters  
welcomes

allocate funds based on student enrollment, with a per student amount that adjusts for inflation each fiscal year. These resources will enable us to continue to provide individualized career planning, connecting students with employers, internships, apprenticeships, and vocational training programs.

One of the Blueprint's most significant advantages, which would be shored up in passing this bill, is its emphasis on collaboration. By leveraging the expertise and resources of Maryland's workforce development boards, we can provide better support to county public schools, which often lack the capacity to fully

guest commentary submissions at [editor@marylandmatters.org](mailto:editor@marylandmatters.org).

We suggest a 750-word limit and reserve the right to edit or reject submissions. We do not accept columns that are endorsements of candidates, and no longer accept submissions from elected officials or political candidates.

implement career coaching programs on their own. Workforce boards bring connections to employers, access to industry-specific training programs and a deep understanding of regional labor market needs.

To date, local workforce boards have collectively hired more than 200 professionals to provide career counseling and guidance in middle and high schools across the state. In addition, over 190,000 students were reached through workforce-led career counseling in the program's first year alone. This collaborative approach ensures that students receive comprehensive, real-world career guidance that school systems

Opinion pieces must be signed by at least one individual using their real name. We do not accept columns signed by an organization. Commentary writers must include a short bio and a photo for their bylines. Views of writers are their own.

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alone often struggle or do not have the bandwidth to provide.

As we know, there are many conversations surrounding budget and cost as Gov. Wes Moore and the General Assembly work to address the \$3 billion deficit we currently face. The Blueprint and funding for its various pillars have not been safe from the conversation. However, the reality is that the long-term benefits of career coaching far outweigh the initial investment. By preventing career missteps and reducing the number of graduates who struggle with job instability, we create a more self-sufficient and prosperous workforce.

Maryland has a responsibility to prepare its students for success in an increasingly competitive job market. Protecting the funding for career counseling established by the Blueprint through passing House Bill 772 is a vital step in achieving this goal, will ensure the fruits of this hard work aren't lost and that students will continue to benefit from the program. We urge lawmakers to support this legislation and invest in the future of our students and our state.

Together, we can create a stronger workforce, a more resilient economy, and brighter futures for Maryland's young people. Now is the time to act – let's keep career readiness a priority.

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**KIRKLAND MURRAY**

Kirkland Murray is the president of the Maryland Workforce Association, representing 13 local workforce boards throughout the state of Maryland.

**MORE FROM AUTHOR**



**BRANDON BUTLER**

Brandon Butler is the executive director of the Maryland Workforce Association, representing 13 local workforce boards throughout the state of Maryland.

**MORE FROM AUTHOR**

**MORE FROM OUR NEWSROOM**



**Is increasing the teaching pipeline a pipe dream?**

BY KALMAN HETTLEMAN

March 11, 2025



**Family support, early intervention essential for transition to adult disability services**

BY TRICIA TIMMONS

February 10, 2025



**Don't make our children wait ... again**

BY DAVID HORNBECK

January 16, 2025

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## STATES NEWSROOM

## FAIR. FEARLESS. FREE.

# **Mary Ann Bogarty - Senate Support Letter for HB 77**

Uploaded by: Mary Anne Bogarty

Position: FAV

**Mary Ann Bogarty**

President of the Board of Directors  
Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc.  
410 Girard Street  
Havre de Grace, MD 21078  
mbogarty@jarrettsvillefederal.com  
February 21, 2025

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbear, Chair  
House Ways and Means Committee  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Support for House Bill 772

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

On behalf of the Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc., local workforce development board, I am writing to strongly urge your support for **House Bill 772**, which continues career counseling services led by Maryland's local workforce development boards. As you know, Maryland's local workforce boards and their partners at the state's community colleges and local education agencies are providing career counseling services to Maryland's middle and high school students in accordance with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

This model is already demonstrating success in Maryland and is gaining national recognition as a best practice. As you know, Maryland's local workforce development boards are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between education and employment. Through direct partnerships with businesses, educators, and community organizations, we provide real-time labor market insights and direct employer connections, ensuring that students and job seekers receive career counseling aligned with actual workforce needs.

This approach is already making a significant impact:

- Over 200 workforce professionals have been dispatched to middle and high schools throughout Maryland to support career counseling.
- In just the first year, more than 190,000 students were reached through workforce-led career guidance, helping them explore pathways into high-demand careers.
- States across the country are looking to Maryland as a model for how workforce boards can enhance career counseling and strengthen talent pipeline development.

House Bill 772 continues the work of the workforce development boards and their partners in

career counseling, ensuring that every student in Maryland has access to the knowledge and resources necessary to make informed career decisions. This legislation is not just about guidance—it's about equipping Maryland's future workforce with clear, attainable pathways to good-paying, in-demand jobs.

We respectfully ask for your **support in advancing House Bill 772** to ensure that Maryland continues leading the way in workforce-aligned career counseling. Thank you for your time and Consideration.

Sincerely,

**Mary Ann Bogarty**

President of the Board of Directors

Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc.

**HB0772-EEE-FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT  
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations  
88 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

**HB772**

April 2, 2025

**TO:** Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

**RE:** House Bill 772 - Education - Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students - Alterations

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 772.

HB 722 continues the career counseling services for middle and high school students provided by Maryland's local workforce development boards, community colleges and local education agencies started under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. These services ensure that students receive real-time, industry-aligned career counseling, helping to build a skilled workforce and address skill gaps in Maryland's economy.

Maryland's local workforce development boards, including the Baltimore Workforce Development Board and the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, play a critical role in bridging the gap between education and employment, offering direct connections to employers, labor market insights, and career pathway resources. Already, in Baltimore City, this model has major accomplishments, with:

- 46 workforce professionals deployed to middle and high schools for one to four days a week.
- Holding more 1,000 events, including workshops, company tours/job shadows, career fair support, and guest speaker engagements.
- More than 17,000 students reached as of February 2025, in less than one year, ensuring they have the tools to make informed career decisions.

HB 722 reinforces the partnerships between our workforce boards, educators, and businesses, ensuring that they continue and grow into the future. By aligning career counseling with labor market needs, this legislation continues to work toward preparing Maryland's future workforce for high-demand careers in growing industries.

For the above stated reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 772.

**HB0772-EEE\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sarah Sample

Position: FAV



## House Bill 772

### *Education - Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students - Alterations*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Committee

Date: April 2, 2025

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 772 as amended. This bill would continue the intent of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future ("the Blueprint") that local workforce development boards receive funds dedicated to student career counseling and readiness and oversee such programs.

The Blueprint places a deeper emphasis on alternative education and workforce development – especially on career and technical education (CTE) and developing pathways for Maryland high schoolers to pursue careers instead of traditional post-secondary college or university. One way that the Blueprint envisions doing so is by creating Local Career Counseling Agreements in each county between the local board of education, local workforce development board, and the county's community college. The law currently dictates that "Each county board [of education] shall distribute to the local workforce development board for the county..." a per pupil funding amount based on enrollment to provide career counseling and related programming.

HB 772 would require county boards of education to continue to send these dedicated funds to local workforce development boards to carry out this aspect of the Blueprint. In doing so, the legislation clarifies any confusion on which entity is to receive and manage these programs and funds. Counties strongly agree with the Blueprint that local workforce development boards are best equipped to manage such programs, and many have already started partnering with their local workforce development boards and community colleges on CTE and career readiness.

Counties are proud fiduciary supporters of local workforce development boards, community colleges, and public schools. HB 772 will help ensure that career readiness is prioritized in public education, as intended by the Blueprint, and will clarify expectations on the funding and operations of related programs. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** HB 772 as amended.

**AACCW Letter of Support\_HB772.pdf**

Uploaded by: Stacie Spragins

Position: FAV



March 24, 2025

Senator Brian J. Feldman  
Chair, Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Subject: Letter of Support for HB772 – Career Counseling for College and Career Readiness**

Dear Senator Feldman,

On behalf of the Anne Arundel County Commission for Women (AACCW), I am writing to express our strong support for **HB 772 – Career Counseling for College and Career Readiness**, a critical measure aimed at ensuring career counseling remains at the center of a student’s journey toward college and career readiness. This bill passed the House with a vote of 136-2, thus showing strong bipartisan support. This bill has now been referred to your committee. Its aim is to strengthen the partnership between local workforce development boards, schools, and community organizations to better prepare Maryland students for their future careers.

Our Commission has witnessed firsthand the transformative impact that career development and exploration opportunities can have on students. Through our *Journey to Success* Career Panels, we have worked to empower teens preparing to enter the workforce, providing them with direct access to professional women from diverse industries across Anne Arundel County. These panels create a unique platform for school-aged girls to engage in meaningful discussions on higher education, vocational training, and career pathways. A key theme of the panel is that career journeys are unique, and success looks different for everyone.

This year, we expanded our *Journey to Success* program through a partnership with the Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC). AAWDC, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, delivers innovative, high-quality workforce development services to Anne Arundel County businesses and residents. Notably, AAWDC provides in-school Career Coaches at every middle and high school in the county, helping students navigate their college and career readiness journeys. Through this partnership, we have collaborated with individual Career Coaches to support career fairs and career exploration opportunities at their respective schools.

As a result of this collaboration, the *Journey to Success* program reached over 500 students across three middle schools in Anne Arundel County this year. These panels have been instrumental in helping students explore potential career paths, gain valuable life lessons, and hear personal stories of challenges and successes from working professionals. Looking ahead,



the Commission is eager to expand its outreach to non-traditional and at-risk youth in the coming year, ensuring that all students—regardless of background—have access to meaningful career development resources.

**HB 772** aligns directly with these efforts. It ensures that county boards of education allocate sustained funding for career counseling programs, including partnerships like ours with AAWDC. Additionally, the bill strengthens accountability and program improvement by requiring annual reports on the effectiveness of career counseling services. By reinforcing the connection between workforce development entities and schools, HB 772 provides students with the tools they need to make informed career choices and transition into high-demand jobs, vocational training, or higher education.

As a commission committed to equity, opportunity, and economic mobility, we firmly believe that HB 772 is a necessary step toward ensuring Maryland students have the support they need to succeed. We urge you and your colleagues to support this bill and champion its passage. Your leadership on this issue will make a lasting impact on Maryland students, families, and the future workforce.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide additional information or testimony in support of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Stacie Spragins  
Chair, Advocacy Committee  
Anne Arundel County Commission for Women  
Stacie.spragins@gmail.com  
(562) 587-4180

Carolyn Keaton Culp  
Chair  
Maryland Commission for Women  
ckculp@gmail.com

Gina Worthey  
Vice Chair  
Maryland Commission for Women  
gcworthey@gmail.com

# **Testimony in Support of House Bill 772 - Stephanie**

Uploaded by: Stephanie Adibes

Position: FAV

## **Testimony in Support of House Bill 772**

*Education – Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students – Alterations*

### **Submitted by:**

Stephanie Adibe

3/31/2025

### **Committee Members,**

I am honored to submit this testimony in strong support of **House Bill 772**, an essential piece of legislation that reinforces the current policy for all middle and high school students across Maryland to receive vital career counseling services. As someone who has been supporting the delivery of these services over the last year, I have seen the transformation of student lives and deep impact of this work. I believe this bill is a crucial step toward providing students with the tools and resources they need to make informed career decisions early in their academic Journey.

As we move toward a future where the job market is constantly evolving, it is more important than ever for students to have access to individualized, tailored career counseling services. By involving workforce development boards and community colleges in the service delivery process, we break down silos and work collaboratively to provide a full range of services. When we are able to equip students with more holistic guidance and career exploration, we ensure they are better prepared to enter the workforce with clarity and confidence.

In Howard County, the school system, workforce development board and community college collaborate seamlessly to provide unique experiences that were not previously offered by the school system to ensure resources are not only available but are tailored to the current job market trends. This year, Howard County's Office of Workforce Development spearheaded a job shadow program to connect students with local businesses and high demand occupations based on their specific career interests. Students are working with staff in a variety of health care, IT, communications, engineering, finance, business, etc. professions to learn about a wide range of roles, hone their post-secondary plans, and connect to work experiences like internships and apprenticeships. Just this week, students shadowed various staff at M&T Bank Stadium and learned about sports management and marketing from the Sports Information Director and Manager of Fitness and Recreation at Howard Community College.

The collaborative career counseling approach is also necessary to support Maryland's goal for apprenticeship and industry-recognized credentials. In Howard County, a Youth Apprenticeship Summit was held in partnership with the local workforce development board, community college and school system in November 2025. Close to 300 students participated and over 200 applied

to the program. The partners are convening again to support a youth apprenticeship hiring event this spring and leveraging the energy of bringing youth and local businesses together to connect new businesses to apprenticeship. A system-wide approach is allowing Howard County to engage in more expansive and impactful outreach to the local businesses community by focusing on an apprenticeship spectrum from youth to adults. This practice increases apprenticeship opportunities for both youth and adult job seekers while building a talent pipeline for local businesses.

**Conclusion:**

The Howard County Office of Workforce Development strongly supports **House Bill 772** and the opportunity it presents to strengthen career counseling services for middle and high school students across Maryland. By ensuring that local workforce development boards, school systems, and community colleges have the resources they need to provide high-quality, personalized career counseling, we are investing in the future of our students and the long-term success of Maryland's economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Sincerely,**

Stephanie Adibe

[sadibe@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:sadibe@howardcountymd.gov)

410-313-1060

# **Tony Nichols - Senate Letter of Support for HB 772**

Uploaded by: Tony Nichols

Position: FAV

Tony Nichols  
Steering Committee Chair  
Lower Shore Workforce Alliance  
Salisbury, MD 21804  
tony.nichols@bbsi.com  
3/31/2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair  
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
110 College Ave,  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Support for House Bill 772

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Lower Shore local workforce development board, I am writing to strongly urge your support for House Bill 772, which continues career counseling services led by Maryland's local workforce development boards. As you know, Maryland's local workforce boards and their partners at the state's community colleges and local education agencies are providing career counseling services to Maryland's middle and high school students in accordance with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

This model is already demonstrating success in Maryland and is gaining national recognition as a best practice. As you know, Maryland's local workforce development boards are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between education and employment. Through direct partnerships with businesses, educators, and community organizations, we provide real-time labor market insights and direct employer connections, ensuring that students and job seekers receive career counseling aligned with actual workforce needs.

This approach is already making a significant impact:

- Over 200 workforce professionals have been dispatched to middle and high schools throughout Maryland to support career counseling.
- In just the first year, more than 190,000 students were reached through workforce-led career guidance, helping them explore pathways into high-demand careers.
- States across the country are looking to Maryland as a model for how workforce boards can enhance career counseling and strengthen talent pipeline development.

House Bill 772 continues the work of the workforce development boards and their partners in career counseling, ensuring that every student in Maryland has access to the knowledge and resources necessary to make informed career decisions. This legislation is not just about guidance—it's about equipping Maryland's future workforce with clear, attainable pathways to good-paying, in-demand jobs.

We respectfully ask for your support in advancing House Bill 772 to ensure that Maryland continues leading the way in workforce-aligned career counseling. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Tony Nichols  
Steering Committee Chair  
Lower Shore Workforce Alliance

# **Zachary Tomlin - Senate Support Letter for HB 772**

Uploaded by: Zachary Tomlin

Position: FAV

**Zachary Tomlin**

President

Carroll County Workforce Development

224 N. Center St

Westminster, MD 21157

ztomlin@tomlitech.com

February 21st, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair

Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

110 College Ave,

Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Support for House Bill 772

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Carroll County local workforce development board, I am writing to strongly urge your support for **House Bill 772**, which continues career counseling services led by Maryland's Local workforce development boards. As you know, Maryland's local workforce boards and their partners at the state's community colleges and local education agencies are providing career counseling services to Maryland's middle and high school students in accordance with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

This model is already demonstrating success in Maryland and is gaining national recognition as a best practice. As you know, Maryland's local workforce development boards are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between education and employment. Through direct partnerships with businesses, educators, and community organizations, we provide real-time labor market insights and direct employer connections, ensuring that students and job seekers receive career counseling aligned with actual workforce needs.

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- Over 200 workforce professionals have been dispatched to middle and high schools throughout Maryland to support career counseling.
- In just the first year, more than 190,000 students were reached through workforce-led career guidance, helping them explore pathways into high-demand careers.
- States across the country are looking to Maryland as a model for how workforce boards can enhance career counseling and strengthen talent pipeline development.

House Bill 772 continues the work of the workforce development boards and their partners in

career counseling, ensuring that every student in Maryland has access to the knowledge and resources necessary to make informed career decisions. This legislation is not just about guidance—it's about equipping Maryland's future workforce with clear, attainable pathways to good-paying, in-demand jobs. We respectfully ask for your **support in advancing House Bill 772** to ensure that Maryland continues leading the way in workforce-aligned career counseling. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Zachary Tomlin**

President

Carroll County Workforce Development

**HCPS.FWA.HB0772w.Exhibit.pdf**

Uploaded by: Katie Ridgway

Position: FWA

**March 31, 2025**

**To:** The Honorable Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**Re:** Support with Amendments for HB0772

Dear Delegates and Senators,

I am writing to express my support with amendments for House Bill 0772, which proposes essential modifications to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Support for changes to career counseling originates from the collective expertise of twenty-four Maryland Superintendents, who have identified critical areas requiring improvement, course correction, or intervention to prevent potential challenges threatening the outcomes of the Blueprint.

HB0772 with amendments has the potential to address the dysfunctional Career Counseling Pilot with Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). **It is important to clarify that HCPS has a strong commitment to career driven initiatives and has invested heavily in such endeavors (see attached exhibit outlining HCPS's career-driven work since 2019).**

Our support of HB0772 is contingent on amendments that include:

- A **comprehensive review of existing LEA and WIB programs**
- A **district-specific needs assessment**, including school-level needs as applicable
- A **service delivery plan** with clear recourse if service is not provided
- **Fiscal accountability** for WIBs with the same rigor that LEAs are held-to and clear recourse if funds are not spent appropriately.
- **Performance management** with clear recourse if performance does not meet Blueprint Goals.

The current pilot's implementation has been inconsistent and problematic, creating unnecessary barriers rather than enhancing student career readiness. Where career counseling programs are working well, they are largely led by district-hired and trained staff, reinforcing the critical need for recourse if partners are not performing as the law has designed.

Our position in summary is as follows:

- **HCPS Leads in Career Readiness (see attached exhibit)** – HCPS has been a state leader in apprenticeships, career credential attainment, and fostering a career-driven mindset. Despite this success, the career counseling pilot restricts the district's ability to capitalize on proven innovation.
- **Current Pilot has Ineffective Use of Funds** – A significant portion of funding is absorbed by WIB overhead costs (14% in Harford County), covering office space, network expenses, and non-career coaching salaries instead of directly benefiting students. HCPS is not allowed to charge for such overhead.
- **Current Pilot has Bureaucratic Inefficiencies**– Excessive red tape requires legal reviews from multiple entities for contracts, delaying progress. The WIB has never been able to fully staff required positions, and onboarding career coaches takes months, limiting student access to support. There is a critical need for recourse when such inefficiencies impact service delivery to students.

- **The Career Counseling Pilot Hinders Progress** – Rigid requirements and bureaucratic obstacles prevent HCPS from effectively connecting students to real career opportunities, making career counseling an abstract process rather than a bridge to hands-on experiences.
- **Legislative Action is Needed** – Amendments to HB0772 would allow the State to have confidence in the management of career counseling, maximize the impact of funds, and ensure that resources are used effectively to support students in achieving meaningful career and college experiences.

*The full details of our position are as follows:*

HCPS has been a state leader in apprenticeships, career credential attainment, and fostering a career-driven mindset among students (see attached exhibit outlining HCPS's career-driven work since 2019). The very areas where we excel receive no career counseling funds, and we are explicitly prohibited from using these funds to support apprenticeships. Yet, despite these constraints, as of last week, 286 students are actively participating in apprenticeships—an achievement driven entirely by our ability to innovate and adapt.

Our success comes from flexibility and forward-thinking approaches, both of which are undermined by the rigid and restrictive requirements of the career counseling pilot. Rather than supporting progress, these limitations often serve as obstacles, making it harder, not easier, to connect students with meaningful career opportunities. Career counseling should not be an abstract exercise. It should be a bridge that leads students directly to meaningful career pathways. **When we focus on outcomes instead of rigid processes, we see real progress.** However, when we are required to follow inefficient, bureaucratic structures, results suffer, and resources are wasted.

The HCPS experience with the career counseling pilot is significant:

- **Ineffective Use of Funds**—a significant portion of funding is absorbed by WIB overhead costs rather than benefiting students. In Harford County, we are charged a total of 14% of funds diverted to overhead, while HCPS uses 0% of funds for such expenses.
  - › \$49,000 for a share of WIB office space.
  - › \$34,000 for a portion of their network costs.
  - › \$238,000 for *non-career coaching* office staff salaries.
- **Excessive bureaucracy**—three different lawyers must review every contract before it can move forward. The excessive time spent negotiating and overcoming administrative obstacles detracts from other educational priorities.
- **Persistent staffing shortages**—our WIB has never been able to fully staff the positions required for the pilot. It takes months for our partner to onboard a career coach and place them in schools.

HCPS has made extensive efforts to work within the pilot's framework, but the structural issues remain. Unfilled positions, bureaucratic delays, and a lack of authority to directly manage career counseling have negatively impacted students' access to essential resources.

*We respectfully urge legislators to support HB0772 with amendments, which will empower all to:*

- ✓ **Confidently manage career counseling**, tailoring programs to local structures and needs and workforce demands.
- ✓ **Maximize the impact of funds**, ensuring resources benefit students. Increasing the return on investment is a win for all.
- ✓ **Have recourse for lack of progress**, which is important as responsible stewards of taxpayer funds.

Please support HB0772 with amendments to ensure the future of career counseling leads to the best outcomes for Maryland students.

Thank you,



Katie Ridgway  
Chief of Staff  
[katie.ridgway@hcps.org](mailto:katie.ridgway@hcps.org)



Since 2019, HCPS has transformed the goals, structures, & supports in grades 6-12 for career driven outcomes.



### Systemic Vision & Structures

- **Launched the North Star Initiative** to establish a unified vision for graduate outcomes and promote the development of learner attributes across all grade levels.
- **Released Advancing the Strategic Plan** which includes Superintendent priorities including Career Driven; Graduate Outcomes; Learner Attributes; and Personalization for Academic Needs.
- **Created Blueprint North Star Stakeholder Engagement** and work groups to leverage system and partner expertise.
- **Enhanced a Crucial Leadership Partnership** with Harford Community College (HCC) including nightly data exchanges, regular executive meetings, and shared design of certain positions.
- **Leveraged Local Leaders** including Harford Business Roundtable for Education, Susquehanna Workforce Network, Northeast Maryland Technology Council, and Aberdeen Proving Ground.

### Data & Performance Monitoring

- **Aligned School Performance and Achievement (SPA)** framework to support school progress toward district goals.
- **Launched Early Warning Dashboards:** Completed: Grade 6, 9, & 10. In Progress: Grades 7 & 8.
- **Developed North Star Outcomes Dashboard** for longitudinal data by school, student demographics, and system.
- **Created Public-facing Dashboards** providing a weekly update of key metrics including student apprenticeships and students & families accessing Canvas (Learning Management system), and yearly snapshot of 6th and 9th grade.
- **In-progress K-12 Measurable Continuum** for student learner attributes focused on “I can” statements.

### Middle School Innovation

- **Standardized Middle School Schedules** across all schools, incorporating two 90-minute blocks per week for Project-Based Learning (PBL) and small-group instruction.
- **Aligned Course Offerings** across middle schools, adding student choice in Unified Arts and world language for credit.
- **Adapted Curriculum Delivery** to support Gold Standard Project-Based Learning.
- **Implemented Separate ELA and Writing Blocks** for Grades 6 and 7.
- **Introduced a Weekly 90-Minute Advisory Block** (Grades 6–8), divided into:
  - 45 minutes: Career Coaching, Career Exploration, PBIS, and Financial Literacy (starting SY 2025–26).
  - 45 minutes: Personalized math instruction via i-Ready.
  - In-progress high-performing math students serve as peer tutors after testing out of i-Ready.
- **Improved Family Engagement** with the launch of a new Middle School Handbook (SY 2025–26).

### Career Driven Initiatives

- **Implemented Individualized Career and Academic Plans (ICAP)** starting in Grade 7 to guide through Grade 12.
- **Standardized High School Bell Schedules** to facilitate dual enrollment and shared courses across the district.
- **Developed Student Enrollment Options (SEO)** to align high school and community college dual enrollment processes. Expanded uses include part-time employment and work-based learning modules including Personal Finance instruction.
- **Launched the Harford Youth Workforce Investment Program** with HCC for non-credit programs and credentials.
- **Created Workforce Readiness Skills Modules** for students in Grades 6–12, along with modules on Canvas (instructional platform) supporting industry recognized credentials.
- **Initiated a Comprehensive Student Apprenticeship Program** to connect students with real-world career experiences.
- **Began a Career Coaching Program** (Grades 6-12) following the requirements of the Blueprint.

# **HB 772 - xover- Career Counseling - Alterations.pd**

Uploaded by: Mary Pat Fannon

Position: FWA



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director  
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BILL: HB 772  
TITLE: Education - Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students - Alterations  
DATE: April 2, 2025  
POSITION: Favorable with Amendments  
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports** House Bill 772 **with amendments**.

This bill extends the existing funding mechanism for the Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students for two years, through fiscal 2028. The bill likewise extends the program's reporting requirements by two years. The Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) must report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the effectiveness of the Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students, as specified, by January 1, 2027.

PSSAM appreciates this Committee's thoughtful consideration of our common-sense amendments that will improve this initiative before granting its extension through the 2027–2028 school year, and without an evaluation until January 2027.

First of all, the LEAs are very committed to career counseling and want to see the vision of individualized career plans for students honored and achieved.

When the 24 local superintendents undertook a comprehensive review of each pillar of the Blueprint last fall, the career counseling program stood out as a top priority in need of adjustment. ***This program represents a significant investment—\$55 million annually in new Blueprint funding—and yet is not universally serving students effectively across the state.*** Further, we would contend that in districts where it is working well, it is being managed directly by the school systems.

We strongly agree and believe that career counseling is a critical component of the Blueprint, and collaboration with Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) is important. However, the current structure—embedding the funding in the Foundation formula and mandating direct transfers to WIBs without checks or oversight—is poor policy and fiscally irresponsible.

In addition, the program was crafted without an analysis of existing career counseling programs within LEAs and pushed forward without a needs assessment to target effective implementation. Many career counseling programs existed in LEAs predating the Blueprint and already included robust offerings like CTE, apprenticeships, dual enrollment, early college, and more. There was also no consideration on capacity or expertise of local WIBs to implement this initiative and many have acknowledged they are ill-equipped to take this on alone.

Career preparation and readiness were not new ideas or concepts uncovered by the Kirwan Commission, but the Blueprint rightfully elevated the importance of this work. LEAs greatly appreciate the State's dedicated funding to leverage both historic local investments and to expand partnerships. However, these expansions must recognize local context and strengths, and honor the feedback from educators who have the professional experience to build the most effective programs for middle and high school students' developmental and academic abilities.

As it stands, in non-LEA-led districts, the career coaching program is siloed, bureaucratic, and inflexible. It operates as a top-down, box-checking exercise rather than a tool for real transformation. The return on investment is low, and with thoughtful course corrections, this funding could be a powerful driver of student success.

Importantly, the Blueprint holds **LEAs** accountable for ensuring students are college and career ready by 10th grade or by graduation—**not the WIBs**. Yet in many cases, LEAs have little to no role in overseeing this counseling work. This disconnect undermines our ability to meet Blueprint expectations. Counseling must be fully integrated into the broader efforts underway to prepare students for life after high school.

There is currently no accountability mechanism for the WIBs. LEAs must track Blueprint funds by month, school, and category—down to the student level. By contrast, WIBs are not held accountable to share budgets or provide documentation of services rendered. This is unacceptable for an entity tasked with providing a single service: career counseling.

**Therefore, we respectfully request the following:**

**1. Delay the ratification of the FY 2026 MOU if requested by any party**

If requested by one of the parties to the MOUs, a new FY 2026 MOU will not be ratified by the appropriate state agency until the following actions are completed, or by mutual consent and approval by the appropriate state agency:

- A **comprehensive review** of existing LEA and WIB programs;
- A **district-specific needs assessment**, including school-level needs as applicable;
- A **service delivery plan** outlining:
  - The entity that will hire and manage career coaches;

- Hiring timelines; and
- Service models appropriate for each grade band.
- A **provision** that would allow for the appropriate state agency to **enforce the terms of the MOU by withholding funding** to the noncompliant party.

## **2. Unified Training and Information Sharing**

LEAs shall provide training for all career coaches—whether employed by LEAs or WIBs—to ensure they can clearly articulate each district’s college and career pathways, including academic, CTE, apprenticeship, internship, dual enrollment, early college, AP, IB, and other unique opportunities.

## **3. Fiscal Accountability for WIBs**

WIBs must be held to the same standards of fiscal and programmatic accountability as LEAs. MOUs should require:

- **Annual budgets** aligned with the service delivery plan;
- **Quarterly expenditure reports** to LEAs;
- **Annual program reports** to the appropriate state agency.

## **4. Evaluation and Oversight**

The legislation should require:

- An **interim evaluation report** to the Governor and General Assembly by **May 31, 2026**.
- A **final report and recommendations** by **December 15, 2026**
- Ideally, these evaluations should be conducted by an independent third party with no vested interest in the program.

We believe these recommendations strike a balance between accountability, collaboration, and student-centered design. We welcome continued partnership with the Committee and urge a **favorable report with amendments** to ensure this program is as effective, efficient, and equitable as it was intended to be.

**Attachment:** Original opposition testimony to HB 772



**Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director**  
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**BILL:** HB 772  
**TITLE:** Education - Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School  
Students - Alterations  
**DATE:** February 25, 2025  
**POSITION:** Oppose  
**COMMITTEE:** House Ways and Means Committee  
**CONTACT:** Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents **opposes** House Bill 772.

This bill would extend, indefinitely, the Career Counseling pilot program between the workforce investment boards and county boards of education. Currently, local boards of education are required to provide funding to workforce development boards to support the Career Counseling Program for middle and high school students. Each county board shall distribute \$62 a student, for fiscal year 2024 and for fiscal year 2025, and each fiscal year thereafter, the prior fiscal year amount increased by the inflation adjustment. The local workforce development board along with the county board and any other relevant State or local agencies, shall report to the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) on the use and impact of the use of funds. The purpose of the program is to provide each middle school and high school student in the county with individualized career counseling services. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

PSSAM **strongly** opposes this bill due to several critical issues with the pilot program's implementation. The Blueprint appropriately identified the importance of Career Counseling as part of Pillar III and crafted the pilot program with local workforce investment boards and community colleges to create stronger ties to the business community. The statute reflects that this pilot expires in fiscal 2027, however, the implementation of this initiative has been problematic and inconsistent. Where it is working well, it is largely implemented by staff hired and trained by the districts. In December, 2024 one of our PSSAM's top legislative recommendations was to allow LEAs the immediate discretion to discontinue the pilot

partnerships with community colleges and workforce investment boards (WIBs) a year ahead of the pilot's expiration. House Bill 772 aims to do the exact opposite of our recommendations.

Career coaching is a valuable initiative that should become a permanent program. However, funding for this program should not be allocated to the Workforce Board. While it is essential to continue partnering with the local community college and Workforce Board, career coaches should be employed directly by the local school system.

The sections below reflect some of our issues with the current approach to the implementation of local workforce boards.

### **Lack of Support**

Career coaches across local districts are disappointed with the insufficient support from workforce boards, particularly in connecting students with industry professionals, providing access to networking events, and offering professional development. Workforce boards have also fallen short in organizing school-based career fairs and interviews for students. As a result, much of the responsibility has fallen on LEA career coaches and Career and Technical Education (CTE) staff. For example, in one school district, career coaches have not received updates on local business trends, labor market data, or current hiring practices since their initial training in Summer/Fall 2023.

Additionally, and unexpectedly, professional development opportunities for career coaches have been outsourced to external partners. This was an area in which many school districts expected their workforce board to support career coaches and even some additional school system employees. Furthermore, many districts have found that local workforce development boards lack effective communication and collaboration, undermining their initial promises and intentions to support both career coaches and students.

### **Mismanagement of Funds**

The current financial relationship with workforce boards has been proven problematic across many local school districts. First, many districts report that the funds allocated to their local workforce board are primarily supporting internal operations rather than benefiting students directly. In one district, the local WIB's budget detailed overhead costs of \$49,000 for building space, \$34,000 for other costs, and \$238,000 for salaries for office staff, amounting to 14% of the funds.

In another LEA, the local Workforce Board is unwilling to revisit the staffing structure model regarding the number of coaches per school. Currently, one coach has been assigned to each school, whether it has 75 students or 2,400. The local school system has asked to revisit this structure to better meet the needs of all students, but no changes have been made.

Initially, the local Workforce Board had only one administrative position; however, non-school-based positions have quadrupled over the past 18 months. These positions duplicate the roles already established within the local school system, resulting in financial mismanagement.

### **Issues with Staffing**

Local school districts have identified various inefficiencies in staffing, including the failure to allocate necessary resources for agreed-upon services, inflexibility when it comes to the number of coach assignments per school and unfilled vacancies to the point where, in one school district, 55% of schools experienced vacancies at the start of the school year. Generally, there is a lack of communication during hiring and onboarding processes, leading to some schools being unaware of when a new coach is hired, released, or even reporting to work. Collaboration between the districts and their workforce boards is also insufficient.

The local Workforce Board subcontracts most professional development training to web-based platforms and outside organizations. This was an area where we expected the Workforce Board to support career coaches and some additional school system employees, but this has not occurred.

### **Failure to Deliver Meaningful Results and Accountability**

Overall, local school districts have not seen meaningful and tangible results from the implementation of workforce development boards. This current structure has added very little value to local schools. Their overall lack of accountability has led to incomplete data sharing with the local school system making it even more difficult to assess the programs' success.

Unfortunately, these are just a few of the common problems we have heard directly from our school-based employees.

Local superintendents strongly believe that career coaching is an indispensable resource we provide for students across Maryland's middle and high schools. However, we believe that funding should not be allocated to workforce boards, and instead should be directed to hiring career coaches at the local level, who can ensure direct oversight, accountability, and alignment with student and school community needs.

### **Benefits of Career Coaches as School System Employees**

- Stronger Student Connections: Coaches will better understand how to engage with students and integrate into the school community.
- Equitable Access: Ensuring all students receive career coaching, not leaving it to each coach's discretion.

- School-Specific Alignment: Each principal can hire a coach who best fits the unique needs of their school community, something the Workforce Board may not be equipped to determine.

Again, career coaching is a valuable initiative and the Blueprint statute wisely assigns funding for this initiative, but we should learn from the pilot - the successful and unsuccessful pilot experiences - and allow LEAs the discretion to continue these relationships or bring these important resources to more successful and well developed internal programs.

For these reasons, PSSAM **strongly opposes** House Bill 772 and kindly requests an **unfavorable** report.

# **HB 772- Ed - Career Counseling Program for Middle**

Uploaded by: Brian Dulay

Position: UNF



621 Ridgely Avenue, Suite 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-5414 · 800-841-8197 · Fax: 410-841-6580 · MABE.org

**BILL:** House Bill 772  
**TITLE:** Education - Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students - Alterations  
**HEARING DATE:** April 2, 2025  
**POSITION:** UNFAVORABLE  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy and the Environment  
**CONTACT:** Brian Dulay, Government Relations Director ([bdulay@mabe.org](mailto:bdulay@mabe.org))

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing the state's local boards of education, opposes House Bill 772, Education - Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students – Alterations.

MABE's opposition to this bill is grounded in the association's adopted legislative positions, including any efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum or matters inconsistent with MABE's adopted resolutions and legislative positions. MABE opposes legislation that would infringe on local control and impose mandates.

The 24 school districts in Maryland each depend upon the ability to make sound, fiscal and scheduling decisions based upon local needs. MABE recognizes that career coaching is an essential resource for students in middle and high schools in our state. While the purpose of this program is to provide those students with individualized career counseling services, however, students in many districts have not received high-quality career opportunities during the initial implementation phase of this program. MABE believes local school districts should have the discretion to address these challenges and oversee the programs internally across their local districts.

For these reasons, MABE respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE REPORT for House Bill 772.**

**HB0772 Howard Co BOE Testimony 040225 for EEE - Ca**

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: UNF



**Board of Education  
of Howard County**

Jolene Mosley, *Chair*

Linfeng Chen, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*

Andrea Chamblee, Esq.

Jennifer Swickard Mallo

Jacky McCoy

Meg Ricks

Antonia Watts

James Obasiolu  
*Student Member*

William J. Barnes  
*Superintendent,  
Secretary/Treasurer*

**Board of Education of Howard County  
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
April 2, 2025**

**HB0772: UNFAVORABLE**

**Education - Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students –  
Alterations**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **Education - Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students – Alterations** as an extension of a pilot program that would benefit from flexibility rather than continuing without embedding any lessons learned or innovating improvements.

As a component of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, a Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students was implemented as a pilot collaboration between local school systems and local workforce development boards. HB0772 eliminates the pilot and instead extends distribution of money from the local school systems to the workforce development boards through FY28 as amended by the House.

The implementation of partnerships with local workforce development boards has been challenging and inconsistent for counties across Maryland. The Blueprint set up a model that while valuable in bringing together important agencies, has seen differing outcomes between local school systems and local workforce development boards. The Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School Students was intended to be a pilot with evaluation at the conclusion determining if the partnership should continue.

While the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) appreciates the intent of the program, flexibility to set up and fund a model that gives each entity responsibilities that align with their strengths could increase services and cut down on duplication to make the program more effective. At the very least, funding and accountability measures to determine the future of the program would be warranted. By arbitrarily extending the program as is, HB0772 takes away the ability of local school systems to reimagine continued collaboration with local workforce development boards.

For these reasons, we urge an UNFAVORABLE report on HB0772 from this Committee.