

February 3, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Kahlil Kuykendall, and I am writing to advocate for the development of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) course on student well-being and flourishing for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) personnel and administrators.

As an educator and gender economist with over 20 years of experience, I have worked globally—across Africa, India, and Asia—supporting youth-serving organizations in designing and delivering high-quality educational programs. My expertise includes program evaluation, youth engagement, and mindfulness-based instruction.

Currently, I serve as a Mindfulness Education Specialist and contractor for MCPS, where I have taught in classrooms, coached educators, and trained administrators in stress reduction, mindfulness-based teaching, and leadership. Additionally, I co-developed the MCPS Mindfulness Curriculum Secondary Lesson Plans and have been an adjunct professor at The George Washington University's Milken Institute School of Public Health since 2008, teaching courses in Wellness, Mindfulness, and Stress Management. My commitment to fostering well-being in education is at the core of my work.

Educators understand the profound impact of student well-being on academic success and overall school climate. A dedicated CPD course would equip school personnel with proactive strategies to support students' mental health, emotional resilience, and holistic development. This initiative would not only enhance student outcomes but also provide long-term cost benefits to the school system.

Key Benefits of the CPD Course (Students, Teachers & Administrators)

❖ Addressing the Growing Mental Health Crisis

With rising rates of anxiety and depression among students, educators need specialized training to identify early warning signs, implement appropriate interventions, and create a safe, supportive classroom environment.

❖ A Holistic Approach to Education

Beyond academics, fostering well-being involves emotional regulation, resilience, social skills, and self-esteem—all of which can be cultivated through targeted interventions in a CPD course.

❖ Enhancing Student Engagement and Achievement

Emotionally supported students are more likely to be actively engaged, participate in learning, and perform better academically.

❖ Strengthening School Climate and Staff Well-Being

By empowering all staff to contribute to student well-being, a school-wide culture of support, trust, and positive relationships can be established, benefiting both students and educators.

❖ Long-Term Cost Benefits

Investing in this CPD course would yield significant cost savings, including:

- a. Reduced teacher turnover by improving job satisfaction and minimizing recruitment/training costs.
- b. Lower special education costs through early intervention strategies.
- c. Decreased disciplinary issues and absenteeism, creating a more productive learning environment.

Additional Benefits - For Students:

- ✓ Improved academic achievement through emotional well-being/focus.
- ✓ Fewer behavioral issues due to proactive support and interventions.
- ✓ Stronger social-emotional skills, fostering positive peer relationships.
- ✓ Increased self-esteem and resilience, contributing to long-term success.

For Educators & Staff:

- ✓ Higher job satisfaction and lower burnout rates.
- ✓ Better classroom management through evidence-based strategies.
- ✓ Professional growth opportunities, enhancing career advancement.

To truly support student flourishing, MCPS must prioritize the development and implementation of a dedicated CPD course on student well-being and flourishing. Equipping all school personnel with the necessary skills to foster a positive, nurturing learning environment will create lasting benefits for students, educators, and the broader school community. I appreciate your time and consideration of this crucial initiative and look forward to the opportunity to contribute further.

Sincerely,
Kahlil Kuykendall
