



House Bill 772

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

MACo Position: **SUPPORT WITH
AMENDMENTS**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: February 25, 2025

From: Sarah Sample and Jack Wilson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 772 WITH AMENDMENTS. 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.

To add an additional layer of assurance that the programs will meet the intended purposes, counties would like to offer one clarifying amendment. While the workforce development boards are the most obvious division to carry out this work, the counties and school boards should be able to exercise some discretion, if for any reason it appears that the current arrangements for these programs are not fulfilling the requirements. In those instances, county governments, in agreement with the school board, can exercise the option to move these programs, either into the county government or the local school system to carry out the charge with the specified funding.

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 WITH AMENDMENTS.