



**Testimony in OPPOSITION of  
House Bill 1305: Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports – Workgroup and Study**

**Ways and Means Committee**

**Position: Unfavorable**

March 5, 2025

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates dedicated to ensuring the full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future so every student in our state is equipped to thrive upon graduation. **Strong Schools Maryland strongly opposes HB 1305**, which would halt critical grant funding for the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports for the entirety of Fiscal Year 2026. At a time when Maryland students are experiencing a mental health crisis, this bill threatens to disrupt essential behavioral health services and undo the progress the Consortium has made in expanding access to care.

Mental health challenges among young people are at record levels, and schools are on the front lines. Research shows that [1 in 6 youth struggle with mental illness, yet fewer than 20% receive adequate treatment](#). The Blueprint for Maryland's Future established the Consortium to directly address this crisis by providing coordinated, school-based behavioral health services. The Consortium has already delivered meaningful results:

- Between March and October 2024, 58,000 students received behavioral health services in 80% of Maryland's public schools.
- 70% of students receiving intensive services showed measurable improvement in behavioral health outcomes.
- The initiative has helped expand the school mental health workforce, adding nearly 500 professionals statewide.

Halting funding for an entire fiscal year would abruptly cut off services to thousands of students who rely on them. It would also create instability in the behavioral health workforce, deterring providers from continuing to work in school-based settings. The bill conditions future funding on a study's findings but offers no justification for why a funding freeze is necessary while the study is conducted. The Consortium is already collecting data, analyzing impact, and refining its approach—continuing these efforts does not require withholding resources from students in crisis.

If passed, HB 1305 would directly harm Maryland students, particularly those in under-resourced communities where school-based behavioral health services are often the only available support. The Consortium is working. Students are receiving help. Lives are being changed. Now is not the time to halt progress.

**For these reasons, we strongly urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 1305.**

**For more information, contact Riya Gupta [riya@strongschoolsmaryland.org](mailto:riya@strongschoolsmaryland.org)**