

SENATE BILL 726.pdf

Uploaded by: Charlene Faison

Position: FAV

SENATE BILL 726

By: Senator Feldman

Position: **IN FAVOR**

My name is Charlene Faison. I am a parent of a Baltimore City Public Schools graduate and I am a Baltimore City resident. I am a mentor with Higher Achievement Program's Mount Royal Elem/Middle School location and Executive Board Member with the Parent and Community Advisory Board.

Higher Achievement provides a safe space for scholars in 5th – 8th grades. During my mentoring sessions, I often start off by asking the scholars how their day and week was since we last met. They feel comfortable so they tell me a lot!

Because I am not an educator and do not work at the school, I believe they are comfortable with me and that is why they tell me about the teachers they do not like and even fear. My own child, when he attended Mount Royal would repeatedly tell me about the same teacher. After he matriculated to High School, students at the school would still tell me similar stories about the same teacher and her odd behavior. My son once said to me, 'I don't think she is qualified to teach 6th grade English.' No child should feel that any of their teachers are not qualified to teach because of their inability to manage their own emotions and make it through a class period.

As a parent, mentor and someone with friends and family in the education field, I have seen the stress educators face. I have seen them not know how to process their own feelings, let alone help a child to try to navigate their own feelings as they mature.

SB0726 is necessary because educators need to understand how to balance their own work-life health and find a sense of well-being so they may flourish in the classroom and outside of it. The proposed subjects for which the course to be created would cover are an excellent start and I support it, not just as a parent and mentor but also as a certified youth and adult mental health aider. Stress is real. Mental health is real. Without healthy outlets, educators would be doing a disservice to the students they serve because they may project their emotions onto coworkers and students.

For these reasons, I ask for a **favorable** report on SB0726.

Respectfully,

Charlene Faison, MFA

- Certified Mental Health First Aider, Youth and Adult

- Notary Public

- [PCAB](#) Executive Board Member, Treasurer and [Policy Committee](#) Chair

- Parent, Baltimore City Schools Graduate, Poly c/o '25

- [Higher Achievement Program](#) - Alum, Current 6th grade mentor, Baltimore Advisory Board Member, and 50th Anniversary Planning Committee Member

- [LinkedIn](#) Profile

- Writing Consultant, [The Baldwin Prize](#)

SB726_MSEA_Lamb_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Lauren Lamb

Position: FAV

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 726
Primary and Secondary Education - Educator Professional Development - Course on
Well-Being and Flourishing

Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
March 11, 2026

Lauren Lamb
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 726, which would require the State Department of Education to make available a continuing professional development course on educator 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 44 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 professional practice and classroom environments. As growing numbers of educators report burnout and demoralization at work, identifying and prioritizing strategies for personal well-being is a valuable tool.¹

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.² While it cannot replace a sustainable workload and adequate resources at work, this would be a valuable option for educators seeking a holistic understanding of what they, and by extension their students, need to 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 726.

¹ National Education Association (2025). <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/whats-causing-teacher-burnout>

² Promoting Wellness: A Guide to Community Action. SAMHSA (2016). <https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4957.pdf>

SB0726- State Board & MSDE - Support.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Stefan Redding-Lallinger

Position: FAV

TO: Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

BILL: SB0726 – Primary and Secondary Education - Educator Professional Development - Course on Well-Being and Flourishing

DATE: March 11, 2026

POSITION: Support

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides this Letter of Support regarding SB0726 – Primary and Secondary Education - Educator Professional Development - Course on Well-Being and Flourishing.

MSDE shares the General Assembly’s commitment to strengthening educator well-being across Maryland. Supporting teacher wellness is not only essential to individual health and professional fulfillment, but also a key component of educator retention. Ensuring that teachers and school leaders have access to high-quality professional development focused on well-being directly supports workforce stability and improved student outcomes. The agency supports the requirement to make available a course addressing the dimensions of well-being, as defined in SB0726, to educators and administrators in Maryland. Pursuant to SB0726, the course will align with the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) eight dimensions of well-being.

MSDE notes that an existing course currently available to Maryland educators meets the qualifications outlined in SB0726 and aligns with the federal [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s \(SAMSHA\) eight dimensions of well-being](#). The Teach Wise course, offered through Georgetown University, addresses critical areas including mental health, educator well-being, social-emotional learning (SEL), staff burnout, and related topics consistent with the objectives of the bill. Participants receive a certificate of completion and continuing education credits. Upon completion, the course is eligible for professional development points, and it will be included in the catalogue of professional learning opportunities circulated to local education agencies.

Importantly, this course is available at no cost to MSDE, local education agencies, or participants. As a result, MSDE is able to immediately promote and support access to a high-quality, no-cost option that satisfies the requirements of the bill, without the need to develop new course content or delivery infrastructure. MSDE appreciates the recognition that, should this or a comparable option no longer be available, resources would be necessary to develop and sustain a high-quality course and delivery system.

MSDE respectfully requests consideration of these comments as **SB0726** is discussed and deliberated. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov.

SB726 Written Testimony (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Tara Segree

Position: FAV

Good Morning Senators.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on this very important bill that will help combat the mental health crisis that we are living with in our schools and communities. My name is Tara Segree and I am an author, educator, speaker, and consultant from Annapolis, Maryland. As a teacher for over 20 years, I have witnessed firsthand the decline in the mental health of my colleagues and the rise of burnout due to the demands on the teaching profession. Teaching is one of the greatest professions there is, as we change lives daily and have the opportunity to see the good in all students, and to help them build upon their strengths so that they can have confidence in who they are, collaborate with others, and create solutions to problems. Teachers can turn a child's life of hardships into one that blooms to change the world for the better. We know too that the opposite is true and a child can lose all confidence in themselves if they do not have a rapport built with their teacher. But to build that rapport, teachers need to be optimistic, open, genuine, looking for the good in all students, have wellbeing and be flourishing in their own lives, so they can take on the heavy work of teaching and guiding the next generations.

I absolutely loved my teaching experience. It brought me great joy as I loved my students and colleagues and found value in the daily challenges. But I am not your typical teacher as teaching mindfulness to my students and fellow staff members is something I have done my entire teaching career.

My first teaching job was back in 1997 in Pinellas County Public Schools in Florida, where teaching seemed to be a little less stressful. Times change though and now we have the scrutiny of test scores, multiple Student Learning Objectives, weekly planning meetings, Professional Developments, parent conferences, communicating and logging parent emails and

phone calls, progress reports, report cards, grading, data tracking, lesson plans, observations, classroom visits, IEP meetings, 504 meetings, committee meetings, modifications of lessons to reach all students, department meetings, learning new technology every year, using the new technology and platforms that seemed to change every year for documenting lessons and assignments, and oh yeah... the actual art of teaching, delivering curriculum in a fun and exciting way that makes students want to engage in the lesson. Don't worry, your only competitor is TikTok. And to do all that, don't forget you must build rapport with students because that is the only way they are going to want to engage with you. And we wonder why our teachers are stressed out?

A lot has changed since 1997, and it has changed for the better, but we need to make sure that our teachers are supported mentally and that they are better than fine, because what I have noticed is that they are not.

I was blessed to be at one of the greatest high schools in our state, here in Anne Arundel County, for the last 7 years. The high school was very open to me doing professional developments around wellness and flourishing for our school staff, as well as having a mindfulness room during the open blocks for students, and starting the Student Alliance for Flourishing back in 2020 that is now in at least 7 different schools in AACPS, and other schools across the world. I was able to run multiple meditation sessions for our teachers and staff yearly starting in 2020, as well as run multiple professional developments on bringing mindfulness into their life and their classroom. My professional developments and meditation workshops were very well received and attended by administration, teachers, and support staff.

I separated from the county last July 2025 to do my education consulting in mindfulness full-time, only because it became a conflict of interest. I saw there was a great need to assist

educators with mental wellness. Bringing wellness and flourishing into educators' lives helps them to respond to challenges instead of reacting. The teachers I worked with were lovely and some of my best friends, but they were burnt out and stressed out due to the demands of our profession. The responsibilities continue to pile on more and more each year, and accountability is scrutinized, which is necessary, but we need to make sure our teachers can mentally handle the pressure of the profession.

I have been a part of the School University Partnership for the past 8 years, as a mentor for student teachers from Notre Dame of Maryland University, and as adjunct faculty for NDMU, teaching those student teachers. I have had the privilege of seeing the school university partnership from both sides, as a mentor, as an instructor, and now as a supervisor of international students here to get their master's in special education. That has been a gift as I know what is happening in the classroom, as well as what these student teachers need to understand to be successful in the classroom, including taking care of their mental health.

Teachers need access to tools that will help them regulate emotions and be able to respond to challenges with grace. If SB726 is written into law, teachers would then have access to professional developments that give them these tools, and allow them to be supported, to navigate this world flourishing, and feel valued by their school system.

You have the opportunity to make a big impact on education, by focusing on the adults in the school building, by allowing our educators the power of wellbeing and flourishing, and that wellbeing and flourishing will only trickle down to our students and our communities.

Teachers have to attend multiple PDs a year. Why not include one that benefits all educators and has the ability to help our world evolve into a more peaceful and harmonious planet? The ripple effect will be life changing as teachers, students, and communities will start to reflect the energy

of peace that ripples out from the adults in the schools, to students, to families, to our communities. And isn't that what our world needs right now? A little more peace?

Please vote to make SB726 law to ensure that all teachers have access to mental wellness and flourishing tools that they can then use with their students to make this world a better place.

Thank you for your time and dedication to our state, ensuring equity for all, especially our teachers who mold our future generations.