

BILL: House Bill 740
TITLE: Public Schools – School-Based Mental Health Services – Full-Time Therapist
HEARING DATE: February 18, 2026
POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
COMMITTEES: Ways & Means / Health
CONTACT: Sam Mathias, Legal & Policy Director (smathias@mabe.org)

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all the state’s local boards of education, **opposes House Bill 740, Public Schools – School-Based Mental Health Services – Full-Time Therapist.**

HB 740 would require every public school to employ a full-time therapist licensed by the State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists during instructional hours. While MABE strongly supports student mental health and well-being, this mandate would impose substantial, ongoing costs on local school systems without providing a dedicated funding source.

Statewide, requiring a full-time therapist in each of Maryland’s more than 1,400 public schools would cost hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Absent dedicated or specifically earmarked State funding, these costs would require diverting resources from other mandated educational priorities.

School systems already make extensive investments in student mental health supports. Across Maryland, schools employ social workers, school psychologists, and counselors; schools operate student support and trauma-informed care teams; and schools partner with community providers to deliver in-school behavioral health services. Many systems participate in expanded School Behavioral Health programs through the Blueprint (including the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports, as created by the Maryland General Assembly). [In the last school year alone](#), the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports served more than 94,000 students, and more than 1,000 public schools, with behavioral health supports through this program. These efforts are already expanding access to services without imposing new, unfunded staffing mandates.

While well-intentioned, HB 740 would create a costly and inflexible requirement that does not account for existing staff qualifications or locally designed mental health delivery models. For these reasons, MABE **opposes** HB 740 and respectfully requests an **unfavorable** report.