

FAVORABLE
House Bill 800
Education - Behavioral Health and Student Well-Being and Human Flourishing
(Maryland Student Well-Being and Flourishing Act)

House Ways & Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 800, which would update provisions of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future that refer to "behavioral health" to be inclusive of "student well-being and human flourishing." It also amends the purposes, membership, and duties of the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports to include the furtherance of student well-being and human flourishing

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).

Educators know well that we must teach the whole child: our students are not only students, but complex young people who are shaped by many factors in their lives, both in and outside of the school walls. The expanded definition of behavioral health proposed in 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.¹ This is a thoughtful recognition of the complex nature of behavioral health and child development, and we appreciate that this expanded definition of behavioral health services would encompass extracurricular activities designed to support students' overall wellbeing.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 800.

¹ Promoting Wellness: A Guide to Community Action. SAMHSA (2016). <https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4957.pdf>