



**Testimony in SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS of  
House Bill 800: Education – Behavioral Health and Student Well-Being and Human  
Flourishing (Maryland Student Well-Being and Flourishing Act)**

**House Ways and Means Committee  
Position: Favorable with Amendments**

February 18th, 2026

At Strong Schools Maryland, we work to support the faithful implementation and full funding of the promises legislated through the landmark Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. The Blueprint envisions a public school system that is built upon the foundation of equity, supports all students’ success, and removes barriers to opportunities. **We support House Bill 800, which aims to broaden the scope of the Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports’ work, with amendments.**

Overall, Strong Schools Maryland agrees with the bill’s underlying premise that students need more than academic instruction to thrive. Expanding statutory language to include student well-being and human flourishing reflects an important whole-child approach that aligns with community schools and the Blueprint’s equity goals.

However, this bill arrives at a moment of shrinking investment in coordinated community supports. Last year, the Governor reduced annual appropriations to the Consortium by \$30 million, from \$130 million to \$100 million. This year’s proposed budget reduces it again by \$20 million, bringing funding down to \$80 million. At the same time, schools are facing rising student anxiety, depression, trauma exposure, and unmet clinical needs. Expanding the scope of coordinated community supports to include broader dimensions of well-being while funding is being reduced raises a serious prioritization question: where will limited dollars go?

Maryland’s Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports was created in response to a youth mental health crisis. Students are waiting for counseling, struggling with suicidal ideation, and experiencing significant behavioral health challenges. Any statutory expansion must not dilute the system’s capacity to deliver licensed, clinical mental health services.

We respectfully request amendments to:

- Clarify that behavioral health services remain the primary priority of the Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports funding.
- Ensure that funding for extracurricular or broader well-being programming does not reduce access to clinical mental health services.

- Require transparent reporting on how funds are allocated between behavioral health services and broader well-being initiatives.
- Require disaggregated reporting to ensure equitable access across race, income, disability status, language status, and geography.

We also urge the General Assembly to restore and strengthen funding for the Consortium. Expanding the vision of student well-being while reducing the resources available to address acute mental health needs sends mixed signals. If Maryland is serious about confronting the youth mental health crisis, funding levels should reflect that urgency.

House Bill 800 presents an opportunity to strengthen the Blueprint's commitment to student thriving. With amendments that protect core behavioral health services and a renewed commitment to adequate funding, this bill can advance equity and stability for Maryland's students.

**For these reasons, Strong Schools Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report with amendments on House Bill 800.**

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

**[ORGANIZATIONAL LETTERHEAD/LOGO]**