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**TO:** House Ways & Means Committee

**BILL:** House Bill (HB) 326 – Education – Maryland Center for School Safety – Anonymous Reporting System

**DATE:** February 11, 2026

**POSITION:** Support

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The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides this Letter of Support regarding **HB 326**. The proposed legislation codifies [Safe Schools Maryland](#), an existing anonymous reporting system operated by the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), in the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. The bill requires the Center to maintain an anonymous reporting system, establish standardized operational guidelines, and provide training for school personnel. It mandates that all local school systems participate by July 1, 2027, unless they operate a substantially similar system and notify the Center. Additionally, the bill strengthens confidentiality by explicitly exempting related records from public disclosure under the Maryland Public Information Act.

The Maryland State Department of Education supports HB 326, which codifies the existing statewide anonymous reporting system, Safe Schools Maryland, into law, transforming the current program from a voluntary initiative into a statutory requirement with clear compliance timelines and enhanced privacy protections. This legislation ensures that Maryland continues to provide a secure and confidential mechanism for reporting threats, concerning behaviors, and mental health issues in schools. Research confirms that targeted school violence is largely preventable when early warning signs, often shared through “leakage,” are reported and acted upon. Anonymous reporting systems overcome barriers such as fear of retaliation and the “code of silence,” encouraging students and community members to share critical information. National studies show that tip lines prevent violent incidents and self-harm, reduce bullying, and foster safer, more connected school environments.

HB 326 guarantees the viability of Safe Schools Maryland by requiring operational guidelines, standardized training, and confidentiality protections under the Maryland Public Information Act. These measures strengthen trust in the system and ensure consistent implementation across school systems. The bill also reinforces Maryland’s commitment to proactive safety and wellness interventions, including behavioral threat assessment and mental health support. By codifying this program, Maryland affirms its dedication to safeguarding students and staff, preventing violence, and promoting positive school climates statewide. MSDE respectfully requests consideration of these comments as HB 326 is discussed and deliberated. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley at [laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov](mailto:laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov).