

**BILL:** House Bill 377  
**TITLE:** Commission on Student Behavioral Health and Mental Health Treatment  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS  
**DATE:** February 3, 2021  
**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports the proposal to create a Commission to study, evaluate, and revise guidelines for student behavioral health and mental health treatment and practices, including school-based health centers.

MABE endorses the proposal to establish a multidisciplinary body to study behavioral health treatment and practices for students dealing with behavioral health and mental health issues. To ensure that the school system governance and policy-making perspective is represented on the Commission, MABE requests an amendment to add “One representative of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education appointed by the Executive Director.”

Regarding mental and behavioral health services, all local boards of education place a very high priority on providing school-based health services and programs of instruction designed to promote the physical and mental health of students and to prepare them to maintain a healthy lifestyle as adults. Unfortunately, significant gaps exist in the access and availability of high quality, professional mental health services for students and families.

The COVID-19 pandemic has frustrated and complicated the delivery of school-based health services. Therefore, MABE is supporting legislation to ensure that telehealth services are as broadly available as possible. The Commission proposed by House Bill 377 would facilitate an organized framework for dialogue and the development of improvements to the State’s approaches to meeting the mental health needs of students and families.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 377 with an amendment to add a MABE representative to the proposed Commission on Student Behavioral Health and Mental Health Treatment.