

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 204

(Delegate Attar, *et al.*)

Appropriations and Ways and Means

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Education – Coaches – Mental Health Training

This bill requires each public school in the State that offers an athletic program and each public institution of higher education that offers an athletic program to provide specified mental health training to each participating coach. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must work in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), each local board of education, and the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) to develop guidelines for public schools to train coaches in recognizing the indicators of mental illness and behavioral distress in students (including depression, trauma, violence, youth suicide, and substance abuse). Likewise, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) must work with MDH to develop guidelines for public institutions of higher education to train coaches in recognizing the indicators of mental illness and behavioral distress in students. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MHEC, MSDE, MPSSAA, and MDH can collaborate, as specified, to develop new guidelines for public schools and public institutions of higher education using existing resources. Expenditures for public institutions of higher education and the Maryland School for the Deaf (a State-funded educational institution) may increase minimally to provide the required mental health trainings for coaches. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Expenditures for local school systems and local community colleges may increase minimally to provide the required mental health training for coaches. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: For elementary and secondary schools “athletic program” means an intramural, interscholastic, or other school-sponsored athletic program that is developed and offered to students in accordance with criteria established by the State Board of Education. For institutions of higher education “athletic program” means any intercollegiate athletic program at a public institution of higher education in the State.

Current Law: With the assistance of the local health department (LHD), each local board of education must provide adequate school health services, instruction in health education, and a healthful school environment. MSDE and MDH must jointly develop public standards and guidelines for school health programs and assist local boards of education and LHDs in their implementation.

Chapter 36 of 2020, The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future established the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports within the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission. The consortium must complete certain tasks related to the development of coordinated community supports partnerships to meet student behavioral health needs and other related challenges in a holistic, nonstigmatized, and coordinated manner, including developing a statewide framework for the creation of a coordinated community supports partnership, implementing a related grant program, evaluating a payment reimbursement program for providers, and developing a program for uninsured students. In addition, in consultation with MSDE, the consortium must develop best practices for the creation of a positive classroom for all students. The Blueprint also expanded funding for school-based health centers and for local school systems to train school staff to recognize student behavioral health issues and required local boards of education to enhance and expand the availability of behavioral health services to students.

Health Training for Public School Coaches

Coaches receive training related to the physical safety of students, including training in relation to venue-specific emergency action plans and seizure action plans. Chapter 78 of 2022 requires that, beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, each public school must require that an abridged presentation of the best practices for seizure response based on school health services guidelines be given to all school personnel who have direct contact with and supervision of students, including coaches. Chapter 212 of 2022 establishes that all members of the coaching staff must be trained in the operation and use of automatic external defibrillators, and a trained member of the coaching staff must be present at all athletic practices and events on school property.

MPSSAA operates in conjunction with MSDE and the 24 local school systems in Maryland to provide interscholastic participation opportunities to student athletes. MPSSAA operates

a Medical Advisory Committee that meets three times a year to review the latest information on health and safety of high school interscholastic students, provide direction, and develop policies and implementation strategies of health and safety measures for the betterment of student-athletes.

State Expenditures: MHEC, MSDE, MPSSAA, and MDH can collaborate, as specified, to develop new guidelines for public schools and public institutions of higher education with existing resources. In response to a prior introduction of the bill, MHEC advised it would require one contractual employee to assist its academic affairs staff in developing the required guidelines. However, the Department of Legislative Services advises that MHEC can likely create the guidelines using existing resources, particularly as the scope of the guidelines is limited to recognizing the indicators of mental illness and behavioral distress in students, existing mental health resources are likely available to MHEC, and MDH is required to collaborate. This analysis assumes MDH can meaningfully collaborate with MHEC to develop the required guidelines. To the extent MDH cannot meaningfully collaborate with MHEC to develop guidelines, MHEC may face minimal additional costs to hire contractual support for the research and development of the guidelines.

Depending on services and training already provided, higher education expenditures at public institutions of higher education may increase minimally to provide mental health training to coaches; however, it is assumed that these costs are generally absorbable within existing resources. The University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus advises that, if the trainings are conducted internally, the trainings can be performed with existing resources. Towson University advises that the cost to run trainings could be as much as \$10,000 to hire a part-time contractual employee to run the trainings annually. The University of Maryland, College Park Campus similarly advises that the cost to train coaches is \$3,000 to \$5,000, although the exact amount depends on the length of training required and the cost of the training selected.

Likewise, State-funded primary and secondary schools may incur additional minimal expenditures to provide training to coaches. In response to a prior introduction of the bill, the Maryland School for the Deaf advised the school would face additional expenditures to contract with a new trainer for its coaches; however, any such costs would likely be absorbable within existing resources.

Local Expenditures: Expenditures for local school systems and local community colleges may increase minimally to provide the required mental health training for coaches. Local school system expenditures may include hiring substitutes or providing stipends to allow coaches to attend training. MSDE advises that the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) offers a free [course](#) on Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. The course, designed for both students and coaches, includes a focus on wellness framework, student mental health, stress and anxiety, depression, and suicide prevention. MSDE further

advises that the NFHS concussion, sudden cardiac arrest, and heat acclimatization courses are currently used by local school systems to meet other requirements of coach educational training.

Baltimore City Public Schools estimates an annual cost of \$25,000 for training costs and participant stipends. Anne Arundel County Public Schools advises that expenditures to implement the bill may increase depending on the specifics of the training selected, how the coursework is delivered to coaches, cost of materials, and certificate tracking. Baltimore County Public Schools advises that the school system already retains staff to support the mental health of students and can provide the NFHS training to its coaches with existing resources.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 375 of 2023.

Designated Cross File: SB 165 (Senator Hettleman, *et al.*) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland School for the Deaf; Maryland Higher Education Commission; Baltimore City Community College; University System of Maryland; Morgan State University; St. Mary's College of Maryland; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Baltimore City Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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