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**Testimony in Support of House Bill 202  
Restorative Schools Fund and Grants—Establishment**

**Ways and Means Committee  
January 30, 2020  
1:00 PM**

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The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 202, establishing the Restorative Schools Fund. This legislation—one of several introduced since the 2019 legislative session—reflects one of the many recommendations proffered by the Maryland Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland’s public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for career jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA members know the challenges created by disrupted learning environments, a concept defined in a 2019 report called *A Crisis of Disrupted Learning*<sup>1</sup> written by our colleagues at the Oregon Education Association (OEA). We also know that in order to ensure restorative approaches take root in our public schools across the state, the necessary resources and supports must be in place. Without them, continued implementation of restorative approaches and the ongoing educator professional development that is essential for their survival will cease to exist, thus having an adverse impact on the entire school community and the overall school climate.

In 2019, the General Assembly passed HB 725 (CH 691), which required that restorative approaches be incorporated into district discipline policies and that the State Board of Education provide technical assistance and training to county boards of education on the use of restorative approaches. We noted then that while policy recommendations found in the Kirwan Commission’s report makes provision for the implementation and use of restorative approaches, there is no delineated funding source dedicated to enacting these recommendations. As such, calls for the use of restorative approaches are seen as an unfunded mandate all the while the desire and need for training for educators in how to best utilize restorative approaches in their schools and classrooms grows. While we support this legislation’s effort to create the vehicle necessary to bring this funding to fruition, we would be remiss if we did not express our concern that there is no designated funding included in this legislation. We hope that as the General Assembly continues its work on the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, it takes this omission under advisement and strives to correct it.

**We urge a favorable report on House Bill 202.**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.oregoned.org/assets/docs/DisruptedLearning\\_Report\\_2019\\_v5.pdf](https://www.oregoned.org/assets/docs/DisruptedLearning_Report_2019_v5.pdf) (Accessed January 26, 2020)