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**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland House of Delegates
Ways and Means Committee
Restorative Schools Fund and Grants – Establishment (HB 202)**

January 30, 2020

SUPPORT

Maryland PTA is the state's oldest and largest child advocacy organization that serves as a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. We represent thousands of volunteer members in 900 public schools and we are comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. For 105 years, our mission has been to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Maryland PTA submits this testimony in support of House Bill 202 ("HB 202") Restorative Schools Fund and Grants. This bill establishes a Restorative Schools Fund administered by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to provide grants to local school systems and individual schools for training on and implementation and evaluation of restorative approaches that build and sustain positive learning communities. Money expended from the Fund would not replace, but be supplemental to funding that otherwise is for training on, implementation, and evaluation of restorative approaches.

Maryland PTA supports this bill, because it is a step in the right direction in prioritizing restorative practices. Restorative approaches to student discipline are relationship-focused, and preventative and proactive. They emphasize building strong relationships and setting clear behavioral expectations. When addressing behavior that violates expectations, restorative approaches focus on accountability for any harm done by the behavior and provides ways to repair the relationships affected. We believe restorative practices will improve school climate, advance teacher instruction, and increase student successes.

Last year, Maryland enacted House Bill 725 ("HB 725"), which requires MSDE to incorporate restorative approaches in education regulations and to provide technical assistance and training to local school systems regarding restorative approaches. The new law illuminates the State's desire to make restorative practices a part of the student disciplinary process, as well as the need for disciplinary measures to be rehabilitative, restorative and educational. However, it placed the cost burden for implementation mostly on local school systems. HB 202 would complement HB 725 and facilitate the implementation of restorative practices in Maryland public schools.

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Even though there is no requirement for funding of a grant program, Maryland PTA believes HB 202 is an incremental step toward positively reshaping public education. We hope the Governor would appropriate funds in the State budget to provide additional funds to local school systems for staff development and discipline evaluation. Restorative school grants would only strengthen teaching techniques and learning. Accordingly, **Maryland PTA requests a favorable vote for HB 202.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. Edna Harvin Battle
President