

ADVOCATES

FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

To: Chair Kaiser and members of the Ways and Means Committee
From: Shamoyia Gardiner, Education Policy Director
Re: House Bill 328: State Department of Education – School Discipline – Data Collection
Date: February 5, 2020
Position: Support

As the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Data partner in Maryland, ACY understands the unique importance of publicly available, disaggregated data in public policy decision-making. As a partner organization in the Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline, ACY also understands the unfortunately non-unique frustration of attempting to access easily understood, disaggregated data on school discipline throughout Maryland public schools. **House Bill 328 is even more necessary than it was last year.**

Disaggregated data will provide a more holistic picture about how school discipline is levied in Maryland, including how marginalized groups like students of color, students with disabilities, students who are non-native English speakers are treated in comparison to their White, able-bodied, and native-speaker peers. **When disaggregated disciplinary data is publicly available and easily understood, we can answer questions about why we're seeing certain outcomes, whether we're avoiding difficult conversations about who we value in our schools, and how our other efforts, like the implementation of restorative practices, are making a difference.** The availability of this data would have an immediate impact on decisions about the distribution and powers of School Resource and School Police Officers, implementation of restorative practices, guidelines for trauma-informed approaches to education, professional development offerings such as implicit bias trainings, and much more.

Though we recognize the extreme difficulty of trying to require that disciplinary data disaggregated by student sexual orientation and/or gender identity is complicated to gather, we want to take this time to highlight the importance of and need for this data. **Girls who publicly make their same-sex attraction known experience school-based discipline at a rate 95% higher than their peers, including same-sex attracted boys.**¹ We are also aware that transgender students experience high rates of discrimination in schools and are curious to learn how that impacts school discipline in Maryland. **If any legislator is interested into delving into the data for these marginalized student groups, please let us know.**

HB 328 requires the Maryland State Department of Education to disaggregate all data related to disproportional disciplinary practices and to make all discipline-related data

¹ Mittleman, Joel. *Sexual Orientation and School Discipline: New Evidence from a Population-Based Sample*. SAGE Journals. January 19, 2018.

Advocates for Children and Youth builds a strong Maryland by advancing policies and programs to ensure children of every race, ethnicity, and place of birth can achieve their full potential.

available on the Maryland Report Card at the state, district, and individual school level. Having this data readily available will better position policy makers and practitioners to make informed decisions that will address the school-to-prison pipeline and expand the use of restorative practices in schools statewide. As such, **ACY strongly urges a favorable report on this bill.**