



Maryland Education Coalition



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HB1257/SB0917 Public Schools - Restorative Practices Schools – Establishment
House Ways and Means Committee
POSITION – FAVORABLE

In 2017, the Maryland General Assembly voted for the creation of the **“COMMISSION ON THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE & RESTORATIVE PRACTICES”** ([HB1287-2017](#)), and they submitted a [report](#) back to the General Assembly in 2018. Several representatives from MEC member organizations were members of the commission and since then, MEC and other leaders in the state have been informing and advocating for Restorative Practices to be more broadly implemented statewide. Unfortunately, the pandemic occurred delaying next states toward broader implementation, while creating a much greater need to accomplish the desired goal of positive learning climates and a preventative, rehabilitative or “learning” approach to discipline.

MEC supports the evidence-based restorative approach for creating and sustaining positive learning communities and works to eliminate the “School to Prison Pipeline.” Evidence shows that too many children continue to be pushed out of school. These children are disproportionately students of color, lower-income, students with disabilities, Limited English learners or gifted and talented. Once suspended, these children are often denied crucial instruction time and wrap-around services, creating a significant risk of disengaging from school, dropping out, acting inappropriately, or illegally.

Maryland cannot afford the loss of human potential, which results from unacceptably high alternative program enrollment or dropout rates within all student groups and believes that state provide increased financial and programmatic incentives for local systems to develop early intervention strategies and alternative programs for at-risk, chronically absent, low-achieving, or behaviorally challenged students. Many students who could benefit are highly concentrated in some schools.

MEC supports HB1257/SB0917-Restorative Practices Schools and the use of the restorative approach in other school communities statewide, especially those school systems and schools who do not current use [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports \(PBIS\)](#) found within some Maryland school systems for many years including some Alternative School programs. We also urge collaboration between the [Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports](#), the State and Local Departments of Education and other knowledgeable stakeholders including the [Restorative Approaches in Education](#) program within the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law.

Therefore, MEC urges a favorable report for HB1257/SB0917- Restorative Practices Schools by the Maryland General Assembly and its use elsewhere within Maryland Public Schools statewide. Our children cannot wait.