



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair  
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: 2/28/24

RE: SB917- Public Schools- Restorative Practices Schools- Establishment

### **The MLLC supports SB917- Public Schools- Restorative Practices Schools- Establishment**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of SB917.

SB 917 is pertinent to the Latino community in Maryland because restorative schools have the potential to close existing disparities between Latino students and other groups. Currently, Maryland's student population is 22% Hispanic/Latino students. Specifically, 17.2% of students in Baltimore City are Latino, 15.3% in Baltimore County, 39.3% in Prince George's County, and 34.6% in Montgomery County. However, there is a large gap in graduation rates between Latino students and other groups. According to the Maryland State Department of Education, the number of Hispanic students who graduated dropped from 76% to 72.3% from 2021 to 2022. In comparison, White students had a graduation rate of 93.5%, Black students had a graduation rate of 84%, and Asian students had a graduation rate 96.5% in 2022. There are likely many causes for this disparity, but SB917 seeks to fix the ones stemming from student suspensions, expulsions, arrests, office referrals, and chronic absence. In 2023, the Learning Policy Institute published about the use of restorative practices in 485 middle schools in California and their impact on school and student outcomes. They found that: "increased exposure to restorative practices is associated with a decrease in the number and duration of suspensions for all students... the benefits were most pronounced for Black and Latino/a students, suggesting that expanding practices could help reduce gaps". SB917 has the potential to transform schools which would not only increase graduation rates for Latino students but improve academic outcomes, teacher retention, and student well-being.<sup>1</sup>

SB0917 will alter the duties of behavioral health services coordinators and the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports regarding duties related to implementing Restorative Practices Schools throughout the State. The bill will require the State Department of Education to develop a comprehensive plan to implement requirements for the establishment of Restorative Practices Schools.

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<sup>1</sup> [Background provided by Senator Brooks' office.](#)

Restorative Practices means evidence-based classroom and schoolwide strategies designed to strengthen relationships between individuals and build social connections within a community to foster student accountability for behavior. The bill adds that the Consortium shall create a list of training programs for school personnel to implement schoolwide restorative practices designed to strengthen and improve the school climate to promote positive student academic outcomes and conduct; and monitor and disseminate updated research regarding the most effective restorative practices and best practices on implementation and training.

On or before December 1, 2026, and each December 1 thereafter, the Department shall report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the Article, on implementation of restorative practices schools based in the State.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on SB917.