

Education, Energy, and the Environment
Senate Bill 917: Public Schools- Restorative Practices Schools- Establishment
DATE: March 6, 2024

POSITION: Support

Dear Committee Members,

I am a parent of Baltimore County students and a District 8 constituent. I am a parent working with the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS).

I fully support the establishment of Restorative Practices Schools.

My son was expelled from 6th grade for chronic absenteeism in May 2023; despite me dropping him at the door and being responsive to all communications from the school. In total, he has been suspended about 10 times and 25 days of “in-school suspension” in his short career. His current diagnoses are ADHD, General Anxiety and Oppositional Defiant Disorder. My son was labeled an “absconder” in 2016. He has climbed out of several BCPS windows during his student career. My son was such a consistent behavioral ordeal that he had a code name for the walkie talkies and then a full Student Support Team (a 504 plan, similar to an IEP except no academic goals.) My son consistently scored over 95% on all state testing through 3rd grade. Now he’s a solid C student, his teachers still admit he’s brilliant but he only works when he “wants to.” He’s an ornery old man stuck in a middle-school body!

Establishing Restorative Practices Schools will have enormous and exponentially positive impacts. Implementing the principles and interventions outlined as Restorative Practices will change the paradigm from punitive and exclusionary mindsets and methods. Restorative Practices are a collaborative social exercise that will enhance each participating student and community member and raise up the civility and inter-connectedness of the entire school and wider community. These strategies are ways to pro-actively focus on & wrap-around students and community members that have been outliers or previously felt disconnected, ostracized, blamed, hurt or otherwise harmed.

Conversely, we can keep suspending children for infractions – taking them away from education, instruction & routine that is so critical to kids’ development, when people are experiencing crisis and chaos.

I unequivocally support Public Schools – Restorative Practices Schools – Establishment. I know that my son’s education could have been more effective and less traumatic if Restorative Practices were already in place.

I appreciate you all taking the time to hear my son’s story and my experience.
I urge you to support SB 917.

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