



TESTIMONY FOR SB0917
Public Schools - Restorative Practices Schools - Establishment

Bill Sponsor: Senator Brooks

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0917 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The Blueprint for Education was a landmark piece of legislation designed to give Maryland's children the best education possible. It was the result of years of research and best practice recommendations. It was comprehensive in terms of the process of educating our children, but it's mandate does not cover one other important facet of education – a safe and caring environment.

Restorative practices help wrap the learning aspect of schools with emotional support. They include such things as conflict resolution, mediation, and trauma-informed care. When you have the proper emotional and social supports in a school, both teachers and students feel safer and are more engaged in the learning process.

This bill, if enacted, would require the behavioral health services coordinator in each school coordinate the development of restorative practices in the school as well as training in restorative practices. Each behavioral health services coordinator will be able to rely on coaches, who are trained in restorative practices, in order to help them develop the appropriate practices and training for their school.

The bill envisions that restorative practices are embedded in 50 schools by June 30, 2026 and in all Maryland schools by June 30, 2036. This will be a large undertaking, but if this process goes forward along with the rest of the Blueprint implementation, Maryland will truly have the best schools in the nation.

Our members support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.