

HOUSE WAYS and MEANS
HOUSE BILL 1257: Public Schools- Restorative Practices Schools- Establishment
DATE: February 28, 2024

POSITION: Support

Dear Delegate Atterbeary and distinguished Committee Members,

I am a parent of Baltimore County students and District 8 constituent. I am with Parent Power from 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 diagnosis 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 had 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, he teachers still admit he’s brilliant. 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 outlines 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, parents and alumni that have been outliers or previously felt disconnected, ostracized, blamed, hurt or otherwise harmed.

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 HB 1257.

Shannon Lynn Nicholson
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