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February 26, 2024

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill: House Bill 1257 – Public Schools - Restorative Practices Schools - Establishment

Position: Support

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists throughout the state, is writing in SUPPORT of House Bill 1257 - Public Schools - Restorative Practices Schools - Establishment, which will increase the capability of local school systems to implement restorative practices and thereby better support student accountability for behavior through community social connections and improved relationships between individuals.

Increasing local school system resources by the addition of a restorative practices coach to work in conjunction with the behavioral health services coordinator and school staff will support positive classroom environments and decreases in achievement gaps for students with disciplinary issues, absenteeism, and related challenges. The restorative practices approach deals holistically with student behavior by handling behavioral incidents as they arise along with increasing social and emotional skills in students and staff. Thus, conflict and disruptions are reduced and marginalized students are more likely to succeed. We urge that HB 1257 receive a favorable report.

Thank you for considering our comments on HB 1257. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the Chair of MPA's Legislative Committee, Dr. Stephanie Wolf, at mpalegislativecommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Corrado, Psy.D.

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President

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.

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Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs