

## **Testimony from Timothy Nathan Ferrell, Baltimore City Public Schools Teacher**

### **District 44A**

HOUSE WAYS and MEANS

HOUSE BILL 1257: Public Schools- Restorative Practices Schools- Establishment

DATE: February 28, 2024

POSITION: Support with Amendments

Good afternoon members of the committee.

My name is Nathan Ferrell and I'm a Baltimore city public school Teacher and district 44A voter. I'm writing to support HB 1257 with amendments for the purpose of achieving restorative practices in public schools in Maryland.

I taught for 8 years in Howard County Public schools and 7 years in Baltimore City Public Schools where I currently still work. I deeply understand the need for providing a restorative framework to improve school culture and to manage conflicts.

In Baltimore, where Restorative Practices have already been implemented, it has been done in an uneven approach and generally lacks funding for designated personnel and consistent training and coaching. This bill is a start to establishing the structures needed to allow this work to be successful.

Although I fully support the establishment of Restorative Practices Schools, I propose the following amendments.

- The directly impacted must be represented on the Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports. This should include a parent, an RP practitioner, a student and an early career educator at least. Those who are providing oversight, must have an understanding of the role that whole school communities play in restorative practices in schools.
- There must be accountability measures to ensure quality of restorative practice training and implementation and not just accountability around discipline and suspensions. Accountability should focus on RP coaches and how many restorative circles are conducted, how many conflicts are resolved. The data collection should not solely measure a reduction in suspensions. Schools are

often pressured to just not suspend, but don't have resources to allow for conflict to be an opportunity for learning and repairing harm.

- Commit to building the pipeline of RP coaches. This will be key especially considering the challenges of school staffing shortages.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB1257 with the amendments above.

Sincerely,

T. Nathan Ferrell  
Baltimore Movement of Rank and File Educators

nferrell@baltu.org  
443 799 1714