



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Ways and Means Committee

HB 890: Public Schools - Discipline-Related Data - Collection and Publication

February 21, 2024

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Updates annual data reporting on school discipline by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to include data broken down to the grade level across race, ethnicity, English language proficiency, and disability status.
- Changes how schools report if they have high suspension rates by lowering the disproportional impact risk ratio from 3.0 to 2.0.
- Closes data gaps by requiring alternative schools and programs, as well as public separate day schools, to be included in annual reporting by MDSE on disproportional discipline.

WHY is this legislation important?

- **Improved data for decision-makers to make schools better for students.** Identifying high suspending schools and disproportional discipline experiences requires annual data collection have enough detail and information. This bill would allow annual data to be meaningful for schools, policymakers, and communities so that there are improved experiences for students.
- **Addresses disproportional discipline experiences for students of color and students with disabilities.** In 2018, the Maryland Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices—a body created by the General Assembly—found disparities in the use of exclusionary discipline in Maryland public schools for students of color and students with disabilities. This bill allows for better monitoring of these trends.
- **Closes data collection gaps for alternative schools and programs.** Alternative schools in Maryland are among the schools with the highest suspension rates. This bill extends reporting requirements to alternative schools and programs, and public separate day schools, where many students with disabilities received education. This closes a gap in reporting requirements and encourages accountability for the use of punitive and exclusionary practices.

Proposed Amendments

The Council is a member of the Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline. We agree with the proposed amendment in their testimony. These include:

1. Page 3, line 31 [Sec (F) (2)] add: ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY
2. Page 3, line 33 {Sec (F) (2) (I)} replace: “OR” with “AND”
3. Page 4, line 11 [Sec (G) (I)] , and line 13 [Sec (G) (II)] replace: “IN EACH SUBGROUP” with “ONE OR MORE SUBGROUP”

Improving annual data on discipline increases school accountability, which benefits all students in Maryland, including students with disabilities. For these reasons, the Council supports HB 890 with amendments.

Contact: Dr. Stephanie Dolamore, Deputy Director, SDolamore@md-council.org