



Maryland Education Coalition



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BILL: [SB0068 \(HB0197\)](#) Public Schools - Restorative Practices Schools - Comprehensive Plan

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

POSITION: Support

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) was originally founded over 40 years ago and is made up of over twenty statewide organizations and individual advocates with extensive experience (see below) This has included several MEC representatives, who were members of the [Maryland Commission on the School to Prison Pipeline](#). We also advocate for adequate funding, equitable policies, and transparent accountability for the estimated 900,000 diverse students* in Maryland’s public schools, regardless of their status.

In principle, MEC has supported Restorative Practices when implemented as designed. SB68/HB197, would require the State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop a comprehensive plan for the establishment of Restorative Practices Schools which integrate restorative practices into daily practices and activities of the whole school and to require a county board of education, if they choose, to use the comprehensive plan if the county board chooses to establish Restorative Practices Schools. We believe this is a good next step.

However, we are concerned that some may wrongly assume that Restorative Practices is primarily a discipline plan, **when it is actually an evidence-based practice which could be implemented in any school, to change the culture and climate within a school. This can result in increased academic performance, while closing the achievement gap, which can also result in decreased discipline issues and improved discipline practices.**

Successful implementation of Restorative Practices also requires all staff, including educators & support staff in a school led by the administration and supported by student service staff (school counselors, social workers, psychologists, etc.) to accept, adopt and become properly trained in restorative practices and to develop a restorative practice plan that fits the needs of the school.

Therefore, we urge that any development of a state or county plan includes key stakeholders from MSDE, Local School systems and schools who have had training and experience with the successful implementation, oversight, planning and reporting of Restorative Practices.

MSDE may be wise to also consult with representatives from the University of Maryland [School Conflict Resolution Education Program Center for Dispute Resolution, Maryland Carey School of Law](#). They have experience with the research and implementation of Restorative practices and one of their former members led the former Maryland Commission on the School to Prison Pipeline.

Therefore, MEC urges a favorable report SB0068 (HB0197), which considers implementation of the information mentioned above.

Maryland Education Coalition and Free State PTA

