



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: January 29, 2025
RE: SB68 – Public Schools – Restorative Practices Schools –
Comprehensive Plan

The MLLC supports SB68 – Public Schools – Restorative Practices Schools – Comprehensive Plan

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of SB68.

This legislation is pertinent to the Latino community in Maryland because restorative schools have the potential to close existing disparities between Latino students and other groups. Currently, Maryland's student population is 22% Hispanic/Latino students. Specifically, 17.2% of students in Baltimore City are Latino, 15.3% in Baltimore County, 39.3% in Prince George's County, and 34.6% in Montgomery County. However, there is a large gap in graduation rates between Latino students and other groups. According to the Maryland State Department of Education, the number of Hispanic students who graduated dropped from 76% to 72.3% from 2021 to 2022. In comparison, White students had a graduation rate of 93.5%, Black students had a graduation rate of 84%, and Asian students had a graduation rate 96.5% in 2022. There are likely many causes for this disparity, but SB68 seeks to fix the ones stemming from student suspensions, expulsions, arrests, office referrals, and chronic absence.

Restorative practices have shown promising results, as evidenced by a Johns Hopkins analysis of the first 15 Baltimore City schools that implemented the model, which reported a 44% decrease in school suspensions in the first year. Additionally, a separate study of school resource officers found an 81% reduction in school arrests over a five-year period.¹ By creating a plan for restorative practices schools, SB68 lays the groundwork for transforming Maryland schools.

This bill directs the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop a comprehensive plan for establishing "Restorative Practice Schools", which integrate restorative practices into the daily activities and operations of the entire school. Restorative practices include conflict resolution, mediation, trauma-informed care, and social-emotional learning. The bill requires county boards to adopt this plan if they choose to implement a restorative practice

¹ [Background provided by Senator Brooks Office](#)

model. By establishing a restorative justice model in public schools across the state, SB68 is an important step to reduce suspensions, expulsions, arrests, office referrals, and chronic absence, specifically among Latino students.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on SB68.