

Chapter 240

(House Bill 197)

AN ACT concerning

Public Schools – Restorative Practices Schools – Comprehensive Plan

FOR the purpose of requiring the State Department of Education to develop a comprehensive plan to implement requirements for the establishment of Restorative Practices Schools; requiring a county board of education to use the comprehensive plan if the county board chooses to establish a Restorative Practices School; and generally relating to Restorative Practices Schools.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Education
Section 7–306
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY adding to
Article – Education
Section 7–306.1
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

7–306.

(a) (1) In this section, “restorative [approaches] **PRACTICES**” means a **COMMUNALLY AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE**, relationship-focused student discipline model that:

- (i) Is preventive and proactive;
- (ii) Emphasizes building strong relationships and setting clear behavioral expectations that contribute to the well-being of the school community;
- (iii) In response to behavior that violates the clear behavioral expectations that contribute to the well-being of the school community, focuses on accountability for any harm done by the problem behavior; and

(iv) Addresses ways to repair the relationships affected by the problem behavior with the voluntary participation of an individual who was harmed.

(2) “Restorative [approaches] **PRACTICES**” may include:

- (i) Conflict resolution;
- (ii) Mediation;
- (iii) Peer mediation;
- (iv) Circle processes;
- (v) Restorative conferences;
- (vi) Social emotional learning;
- (vii) Trauma-informed care;
- (viii) Positive behavioral intervention supports; and
- (ix) [Rehabilitation] **PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY**.

(b) Notwithstanding any bylaw, rule, or regulation made or approved by the State Board, a principal, vice principal, or other employee may not administer corporal punishment to discipline a student in a public school in the State.

(c) The State Board shall:

(1) Establish guidelines that define a State code of discipline for all public schools with standards of conduct and consequences for violations of the standards;

(2) On request, provide technical assistance and training to county boards regarding the use of restorative [approaches] **PRACTICES, INCLUDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN BECOMING A RESTORATIVE PRACTICES SCHOOL IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 7–306.1 OF THIS SUBTITLE**; and

(3) Assist each county board with the implementation of the guidelines.

(d) (1) Subject to the provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this section, each county board shall adopt regulations designed to create and maintain within the schools under its jurisdiction the atmosphere of order and discipline necessary for effective learning.

(2) The regulations adopted by a county board under this subsection:

(i) Shall provide for educational and behavioral interventions, restorative [approaches] **PRACTICES**, counseling, and student and parent conferencing;

(ii) Shall provide alternative programs, which may include in-school suspension, suspension, expulsion, or other disciplinary measures that are deemed appropriate; and

(iii) Shall state that the primary purpose of any disciplinary measure is rehabilitative, restorative, and educational.

(e) (1) On or before October 1 each year, the Department shall submit to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly, a student discipline data report that includes a description of the uses of restorative [approaches] **PRACTICES** in the State and a review of disciplinary practices and policies in the State.

(2) The Department shall disaggregate the information in any student discipline data report prepared by the Department by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, eligibility for free or reduced price meals or an equivalent measure of socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, and type of discipline for:

(i) The State;

(ii) Each local school system; and

(iii) Each public school.

(3) Special education–related data in any report prepared under this subsection shall be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender.

(f) (1) In this subsection, “alternative school discipline practice” means a discipline practice used in a public school that is not an in-school suspension or an out-of-school suspension.

(2) The Department shall collect data on alternative school discipline practices in public schools for each local school system, including:

(i) The types of alternative school discipline practices that are used in a local school system; and

(ii) The type of misconduct for which an alternative discipline practice is used.

7–306.1.

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) “RESTORATIVE PRACTICES” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 7-306 OF THIS SUBTITLE.

(3) “RESTORATIVE PRACTICES SCHOOL” MEANS A PUBLIC SCHOOL THAT INTEGRATES RESTORATIVE PRACTICES INTO DAILY PRACTICES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE WHOLE SCHOOL.

(B) (1) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2026, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES SCHOOLS.

(2) IN DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL CONSULT WITH AND SEEK INSIGHT FROM:

(I) EDUCATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS WHO HAVE EFFECTIVELY ESTABLISHED AND OPERATED SCHOOLS THAT INTEGRATE RESTORATIVE PRACTICES INTO THE DAILY PRACTICES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE WHOLE SCHOOL; AND

(II) STATE AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE STUDIED THE EFFECTIVE USE OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES AND HAVE ESTABLISHED THE MOST APPROPRIATE METHODS OF INTEGRATING RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN THE SCHOOL SETTING.

(C) THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION SHALL:

(1) PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO IDENTIFY SCHOOL PERSONNEL QUALIFIED TO PROVIDE INITIAL RESTORATIVE PRACTICES TRAINING AS RESTORATIVE PRACTICE COACHES TO OTHER SCHOOL STAFF;

(2) ESTABLISH MODEL TRAINING MATERIAL IN RESTORATIVE PRACTICES FOR PERSONNEL IDENTIFIED UNDER ITEM (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION TO USE IN TRAINING OTHER SCHOOL STAFF IN A MANNER THAT RESULTS IN RESTORATIVE PRACTICES BEING INTEGRATED INTO SCHOOLWIDE PRACTICES AND ACTIVITIES;

(3) ESTABLISH STANDARDS FOR WHEN A SCHOOL MAY BE DESIGNATED A RESTORATIVE PRACTICES SCHOOL; AND

(4) DEVELOP THE INTENDED OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE METRICS THAT THE USE OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES ARE DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE, INCLUDING IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

(I) STUDENT CONDUCT THAT LEADS TO DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS, INCLUDING STUDENT OFFICE REFERRALS, SUSPENSIONS, EXPULSIONS, AND SCHOOL ARRESTS;

(II) STUDENT ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY;

(III) RATES OF TEACHER TURNOVER AND ABSENTEEISM;

(IV) RELEVANT MENTAL HEALTH INDICATORS; AND

(V) SCHOOL CLIMATE INDICATORS.

(D) IF A COUNTY BOARD CHOOSES TO ESTABLISH A RESTORATIVE PRACTICES SCHOOL WITHIN THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM, THE COUNTY BOARD SHALL USE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DEVELOPED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before December 1, 2026, the State Department of Education shall report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on its comprehensive plan for the establishment of Restorative Practices Schools required by § 7–306.1 of the Education Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2025. ~~Section 2 of this Act shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and, at the end of June 30, 2027, Section 2 of this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.~~

Approved by the Governor, May 6, 2025.