

HB 1166: Education – Physical Restraint and Seclusion – Requirements, Reporting, and Training

Peter Leone, Support

My name is Peter Leone, I recently retired as Professor in the College of Education, in the Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education at the University of Maryland, College Park. For more than 35 years I trained prospective special education teachers at the UM.

Early in my career, I taught adolescents with emotional and behavioral disorders who were outpatients at a psychiatric hospital. All of my students were taught in the Iowa City, IA public schools. During my three years with Child Psychiatry Service at the University of Iowa, and during a year with the Grant Wood Area Education Agency, we did not use physical restraint on our students except in rare instances of potential for physical harm. We never used seclusion to manage students.

The evidence shows that restraint and seclusion are used disproportionately on students with disabilities and students of color. These same students are disproportionately suspended and excluded from schools. Restraint and seclusion are dangerous tactics often employed by educators who are unfamiliar with other tools or strategies to manage and support children who experience emotional crises. The use of restraint and seclusion can lead to serious trauma and injuries to both students and teachers.

I strongly support HB1166 including significant limitations on the use of restraint, the elimination of seclusion in the public schools, and the accountability and reporting requirements.