



## HB23 SCHOOL DISCIPLINE - DATA COLLECTION AND SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

### SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports with amendments **HB23 School Discipline - Data Collection and School Resource Officers**. This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to disaggregate discipline-related data in an electronic spreadsheet format for the Maryland Report Card and provide the discipline-related data to the public in an accessible electronic spreadsheet format. The bill would also require MSDE to lower the risk ratio used to identify a school as high suspending from 3.0 to 2.0. It prohibits a school resource officer (SRO) from unilaterally enforcing discipline-related school policies, rules, regulations, or procedures.

The AACPS Instructional Data Division collects, analyzes, and applies instructional data to assist students, teachers, instructional leaders, parents, and the public. The goal is to enhance learning and positively impact student achievement. At AACPS, student achievement data is analyzed to identify relationships between different types of student achievement measures and to predict student performance in order to better identify appropriate instructional strategies to address the needs of our students.

Disaggregated student discipline data is currently posted on the MSDE website. State regulations require MSDE to develop a method to analyze local school system discipline data to determine whether there is a disproportionate impact on minority students. MSDE may use the discrepancy model to assess the impact of discipline on special education students. If MSDE identifies a school's discipline process as having a disproportionate impact on minority students or a discrepant impact on special education students, the local school system must prepare and present to the Maryland State Board of Education a plan to reduce the impact within one year and eliminate it within three years. A local school system must report its progress annually to the State Board. When presented to the State Board of Education in January 2017, the State Board determined that 3.0 would be the threshold for disproportionality in Maryland. Accordingly, we have concerns that this bill would lower the ratio to 2.0.

In addition, we have concerns with the definition of "high-suspending schools." As with disproportionality, it is important to be very careful with small student groups. According to this bill, an elementary school with 1 student suspended out of 10 would be labeled "high-suspending."

It is important to note that alternative schools and special programs work with unique students by design and should never be compared to comprehensive schools. These schools face challenges and have needs that far exceed any comprehensive school. As such, taking students who are struggling behaviorally and putting them in the same school or program will inherently result in disproportionate data because there is a disproportionate population. Alternative schools and special programs do such wonderful work for students and families and including them in this legislation would have such a negative impact on the hard work that these schools and their staff do every single day.

This bill also prohibits a School Resource Officer (SRO) from unilaterally enforcing discipline-related school policies, rules, regulations, or procedures. AACPS agrees that including this prohibition explicitly in State law is necessary as the role of an SRO does not involve disciplining students. Currently, SROs do not make determinations regarding student discipline and AACPS has policies and procedures in place regarding such interactions with SROs and law enforcement. If there has been a criminal law violated, adjudication is referred to law enforcement to address the criminal aspect of the behavior and a school administrator makes a disciplinary determination in pursuant to AACPS' policies, procedures, and the Code of Student Conduct. In accordance with a student's due process rights and current policies and procedures, it is the school administrator who makes the final school determination regarding student discipline. Once such a determination is made, AACPS policy affords a student appeal rights.

Regular conversation and rapport among students, administrators, staff, SROs, and other law enforcement officials is essential to ensure a more holistic, contextual view of student behavior. These interactions help to facilitate ongoing relationships that create safer school climates among student, administrators, staff, SROs, and law enforcement.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on HB23.