

**Informational Testimony regarding House Bill 146  
Education – Reportable Offenses and Student Discipline – Alterations**

**Ways and Means  
Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022  
1:00 p.m.**

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The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony on HB 146, which would, in part, repeal a requirement that a law enforcement agency notify school staff if a student is arrested for a reportable offense and change the definition of "reportable offense" to involve only offenses that occurred off school premises.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students for the careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA members have voiced our strong and unwavering support for efforts to close the school-to-prison pipeline, adamantly believing that the only pipeline we wish to see our students on is the one leading them to college or career and a bright future. We have also been strong advocates for the use of restorative approaches in our schools because we know they have been shown to be transformative in many schools across Maryland and across the nation. We have enthusiastically supported a myriad of efforts and approaches aimed at creating safe and nurturing school environments where teachers can teach, and all students can learn. We neither desire nor endorse any action that would stigmatize any student who finds themselves in a situation involving the criminal justice system, and we support efforts to continue providing academic instruction in a safe, appropriate setting for the student in question, other students, and staff.



Regarding the proposed repeal of reporting requirements upon an arrest, we are concerned that many educators would remain largely ignorant of what is happening with students alleged to be connected to a situation involving a reportable offense. This information could be crucial, as educators are tasked with providing a safe and non-disruptive learning environment for all students, including the student involved with law enforcement. We are also concerned about the proposed changes to the list of “reportable offenses” and the provision rendering the report of a conviction to the school system a discretionary determination by the State’s Attorney office as opposed to a mandatory report. The school system and administration should be made aware of facts rather than relying on the rumor mill that exists in every school. Having these facts helps to ensure that the school system, administration, and teachers can respond appropriately.

We all recognize the need to keep our young people out of the courtroom and in the classroom. We must also recognize the importance of ensuring that all members of the school community have a safe learning and working environment in which to function. Finding the right balance is by no means easy. It is, however, essential if we are to provide all of Maryland’s children with a world-class education that prepares them for college, career, and life.