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I, Darrell Birckett, retired educator, administrator and Pupil Personnel Worker support HB-1190- Juveniles Truancy Reduction Pilot Program – Expansion.

I have been involved in the Truancy Reduction Court Program with Worcester County Public Schools since its conception (2007) as a Student Services Specialist until my retirement in June 2022. It is currently by far the best it has ever been due to the stakeholders involved. The families engaged and participating in the program. They attend and are connected to services provided by local agencies and community organizations. Parents are contacting their court-provided case managers for assistance with barriers as well as reporting accomplishments that their child has achieved as a result of redirection through the program and services rendered. What I have found to be even more astounding is the youth participants' engagement in stating what they need to excel socially, emotionally and academically. The court and the program staff have worked to allow them to have a voice in their recovery and participate as an equal partner; this has been a recipe for success.

Student success/achievement and parent engagement is attributed to the partnerships and connections established by the Truancy Reduction Court Program coordinator and case managers. Parents and students feel empowered and that they have an ally to resort to if needed. The team consistently exhausts all possibilities to ensure families are getting the services they need to meet with success. They are genuine, compassionate and receptive; yet families know that they are accountable and all reporting will be accurate regarding their participation both good and bad. The success of the program, partnerships and camaraderie that the coordinator and case managers possess made me contemplate delaying my retirement. I highly recommend the passing of HB-1190 as I wholeheartedly believe school systems and communities, but most importantly families, across Maryland should have the same access to this level of intervention through the Court's guidance, treatment and rehabilitation.

Sincerely,



Darrell Birckett