



**Testimony in Support of
House Bill 18: Education – Reporting Arrests of Students – Alterations**

Judiciary Committee

Position: Oppose

February 1, 2024

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of advocates committed to the core value that the systems impacting our state’s students must treat them justly so they can thrive. We are also a member of the Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline (CRSD), which brings together advocates, service providers, and community members to transform school discipline practices within Maryland’s public school systems. **Strong Schools Maryland opposes House Bill 18**, which would expand reporting of reportable offenses and release confidential student information to the Maryland Center for School Safety and the State Board.

When students are arrested off school grounds for conduct unrelated to school, school districts can, and often do, remove students from school for indefinite periods of time. Present law requires that a mere arrest trigger reporting to the school district and school officials. This bill proposes further dissemination of information to additional state agencies. The sharing of confidential, reportable offense information, even after the child is no longer under the supervision of the juvenile justice or criminal justice court, creates barriers in the student’s education and perpetuates stigma, specifically negatively impacting Black communities already disproportionately suspended and expelled from Maryland schools and targeted in the criminal justice system¹. If enacted, this bill would also tax school officials to address issues beyond the scope of the school, which instead should be handled by strong community institutions.

The passage of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future began a new period in Maryland’s journey to achieve educational equity. Our state is set to make record investments in education to ensure a successful future for young people including investments into community schools, which provide community-based resources for students and expand access to trauma and behavioral health support.

¹ [Maryland State Department of Education](#)



It is the responsibility of the Maryland General Assembly to advance legislation that fosters trustworthy relationships between schools and students. Additional reporting of personal information to State agencies is incompatible with a cohesive commitment to the Blueprint.

For these reasons, we request an unfavorable report on House Bill 18.

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