

SB 482 .pdf

Uploaded by: Michell Schalik

Position: FAV

February 19, 2025

Dear Maryland Senators,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 482. I am a public school art teacher who has taught at the elementary level for almost 20 years. Over the past five years, I have written to all my representatives begging for legislation that would protect the learning environment, mandate safe classrooms free from violence and disruption. I am pleased to see SB 482 and believe it should gain bipartisan support. Afterall, who would not support "The Right To Teach".

I actually believe the bill should include elementary age students because we are seeing an increase in extreme behaviors at this level. I have seen entire classes have to be evacuated because of one student who is allowed to completely destroy a classroom. When school systems prioritize one student's disruptive behavior over the rest of the students' right to an education it is no longer school. At that point it becomes a hostage situation. I also regularly see teachers and staff physically assaulted. I wish you would look at the data that shows how many teachers have to receive medical attention for physical harm done by students not just in middle and high school but elementary school too.

Recently, I consoled a younger teacher after she had been attacked and punched repeatedly by a student. She called the office for support but when the guidance counselor arrived the student was not removed. When my colleague sought support from her administration they neglected to follow the code of conduct put forth by HCPSS and never employed any restorative practices before having the student come back to class.

It is absolutely no wonder that there is a teacher shortage. Had I known that being a teacher would put me at risk I would have chosen a different profession. I am eligible for early retirement 9/1/2026. I love teaching but I cannot continue teaching in an environment that allows disruptive students to rob peers of their education. I have to prioritize my own mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Every day I go to school I know I am at risk of injury at the hands of violent children. So many question how much harm an elementary child can do to an adult. Believe me, it is significant. Besides being hit, kicked and bitten, adults are getting head injuries, broken bones, and stabbed. I've even seen a staff member sprayed with a fire extinguisher requiring medical attention for eyes and breathing. How much more abuse do you think teachers/staff should suffer at the hands of children? These teachers are heroes because if they weren't the ones sustaining this abuse more innocent children would be victims. I ask you to please support SB and preserve the right to teach and learn.

Sincerely,
Michell Schalik

Written testimony for SB 482_ HB 773_ Public Middl

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: FWA

Written testimony for **SB 482/ HB 773**: Public Middle and High Schools - Student Discipline (Right to Teach Act of 2025) - Please **VOTE YES, with Amendments**, on this bill.

Dear Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

This bill reads "...Authorizing a teacher in a public middle or high school in the State to take certain disciplinary actions in response to certain student behavior and to direct students to certain school officials; and prohibiting a county board of education from taking disciplinary action against a certain teacher for certain actions..."

IN RESPONSE TO BEHAVIOR BY A STUDENT THAT DOES NOT CONFORM TO THE BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES ADOPTED BY THE COUNTY BOARD IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 7-306(D) OF THIS SUBTITLE, **A TEACHER MAY REMOVE A STUDENT FROM THE CLASSROOM**...IF A TEACHER REMOVES A STUDENT FROM THE CLASSROOM UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION, THE TEACHER SHALL: (1) DOCUMENT THE STUDENT'S BEHAVIOR; (2) SUBMIT THE DOCUMENTATION OF THE BEHAVIOR TO THE PRINCIPAL; AND (3) SEND THE STUDENT TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR...A PRINCIPAL **MAY NOT RETURN A STUDENT TO A TEACHER'S CLASSROOM** WITHOUT THE TEACHER'S CONSENT, UNLESS THE PRINCIPAL, GUIDANCE COUNSELOR, AND TEACHER DETERMINE THAT THE PLACEMENT IS THE BEST OR ONLY OPTION AVAILABLE...

A COUNTY BOARD **MAY NOT TAKE DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST A TEACHER** WHO REMOVES A STUDENT FROM A CLASSROOM IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTIONS (B) AND (C) OF THIS SECTION..."

This is a good bill, because it will allow teachers to send disruptive students to either the principal or the guidance counselor, so that the teacher can continue to provide the best learning environment for their entire classroom of students.

However, I believe the bill could be better by **amending the bill, amending the following wording** in the bill:

"...(E) IF A STUDENT IS SENT TO THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION, THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR SHALL DISCIPLINE THE STUDENT USING **ANY AND ALL MEANS OF DISCIPLINE** IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 7-306 OF 6 THIS SUBTITLE..."

First, if a student is sent to the guidance counselor for disruptive behavior, the guidance counselor should **not** discipline the student using **only “restorative approaches”**. The guidance counselor **should be able to use every means** of discipline available to the school, and the discipline should complement the severity of the disruptive behavior of the student. For example, if the student was egregiously offensive to another student or was threatening or causing violence to another student, then that student needs to be disciplined using more than “restorative approaches”. We have to show students that we will not tolerate inappropriate, disruptive behavior in our schools. If children know that they will only receive a “slap on the wrist” type of punishment or discipline, then they will continue to behave inappropriately or disruptively. And all of our other students deserve better.

I believe this bill would also be better by **deleting the following wording** from the bill:

“(G) A STUDENT WHO IS REMOVED FROM A CLASSROOM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SECTION MAY NOT BE CONSIDERED REMOVED FROM THE CLASSROOM FOR PURPOSES OF A REPORTING REQUIREMENT UNDER § 7–306 OF THIS SUBTITLE...”

Second, I think we do our schools an **injustice**, as far as reporting is concerned, if we do **not report** a student who is removed from a classroom. Why would we do that? If a student was removed from a classroom and we do not report it, then we **do not** have a **true picture** or true, reliable data of how many students are being removed from our classrooms. This part of the bill serves no good purpose.

Other than those two **Amendments** to this bill, I think this is a good bill that will let our teachers do what they were hired to do: teach. And this bill should positively impact our students’ learning outcomes, which is what we all want.

Therefore, please **VOTE YES, WITH AMENDMENTS** on this bill.

Thank you for your courtesy, time and attention.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals

A Very Concerned Mother of 3 and Maryland Resident

MSCA SB 482 UNFAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Holly Kleiderlein

Position: UNF



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Bill Number: Senate Bill 482 – Public Middle and High Schools – Student Discipline (Right to Teach Act of 2025)

Hearing Date: February 21, 2025

Position: Oppose

The Maryland School Counselor Association (MSCA), representing over 900 professional school counselors working with students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade in public, private, charter, and magnet schools, strongly **opposes SB 482**. This bill grants public middle and high school teachers the authority to take disciplinary action in response to certain student behaviors and to refer students to school principals or “guidance counselors” for discipline. Additionally, it prohibits county boards from taking action against principals or “guidance counselors” for specific disciplinary decisions.

MSCA opposes this legislation because each school system already has established protocols for managing student behavior, and SB 482 contradicts trauma-informed practices that prioritize student well-being and long-term success.

Furthermore, the bill uses the outdated term “guidance counselor.” The preferred and accurate title today is “school counselor,” which reflects our profession’s comprehensive role in supporting students’ academic, career, and social-emotional development—not just providing career guidance.

School counselors are highly trained in promoting positive student behavior and preventing disruptions. We maintain supportive, non-threatening relationships with students to foster their achievement and personal growth. As key contributors to schoolwide discipline strategies, school counselors serve as resources for school staff in developing proactive, research-based interventions.

By policy, school counselors should remain neutral, acting as consultants, mediators, and student advocates—not as disciplinary enforcers, as implied in SB 482. Maryland’s school systems already implement trauma-informed and restorative practices to address student behavior effectively. School counselors collaborate with school teams to manage repeated or disruptive behaviors through strategies that prioritize student support over punitive action.

Effective discipline within a trauma-informed framework moves away from traditional punitive measures—like those suggested in SB 482—and instead prioritizes student safety, recognizes trauma triggers, and employs

restorative practices to address behavioral concerns. These approaches, already in place across Maryland, include community circles, conflict mediation, and individualized counseling to encourage open dialogue and reflection. By actively listening to students and working collaboratively to develop constructive solutions, we foster a more supportive and effective learning environment.

Old-school, punitive discipline methods are ineffective and outdated. Maryland has already taken meaningful steps toward discipline reform, and it was the right move. We must continue allowing school systems to address student behavior using restorative and trauma-informed approaches rather than regressing to outdated disciplinary policies.

For these reasons, MSCA urges an unfavorable report on SB 482. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Jocelyn I. Collins at jcollins@policypartners.net.

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Uploaded by: Leslie Margolis

Position: UNF

Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities

SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY & THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 482: Public Middle and High Schools—Student Discipline (Right to Teach Act of 2025)

DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2025

POSITION: OPPOSE

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC), a coalition of nearly 50 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland, strongly opposes Senate Bill 482, which would allow teachers to remove students from their classrooms for behavior “that does not conform to the behavioral guidelines adopted by the county board” and would allow principals to engage in a variety of disciplinary actions, including in-school suspension, moving the child to another classroom, placing the student in an alternative program, and limiting the student’s attendance at, or participation in, school-sponsored or school-related activities. Additionally, Senate Bill 482 would, except under certain circumstances, prohibit a principal from returning a student to their classroom without the teacher’s consent. For a host of reasons, Senate Bill 482 violates the rights of students with disabilities.

Senate Bill 482 would allow a student to be removed from class if the student “has repeatedly interfered with the teacher’s ability to communicate with other students in the classroom or with other students’ ability to learn effectively.” This is exactly the situation addressed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirement that an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must consider positive behavior interventions, strategies and supports to address the student’s behavior if it interferes with the student’s ability to learn or the ability of others to learn. Recognizing that students may engage in disability-related challenging behavior, the IDEA includes provisions requiring functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans.

Additionally, Senate Bill 482 fails to define “unruly”, “disruptive” or “abusive” and fails to address the reasons why students with disabilities may engage in behavior that may be perceived as “unruly”, “disruptive” or “abusive.” For example, students with disabilities may engage in challenging behavior because they do not have an effective means of communication as required by the IDEA and the Americans with Disabilities Act, or because their IEPs or Section 504 plans are not appropriate or because they are not receiving the services required by their IEPs or Section 504 plans.

Further, permitting a teacher to refuse to allow students back into their classroom makes it likely that students with disabilities whose teachers would prefer not to teach them will be removed to more restrictive settings in violation of the IDEA; this would also create an end run

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February 21, 2025
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around well-established requirements governing how students with disabilities may be disciplined.

Senate Bill 482 violates the most basic tenets of law governing the education of students with disabilities.

For these reasons, the EAC strongly opposes Senate Bill 482.

Contact: Leslie Seid Margolis at lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org or 443-692-2505.

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Almazan, Selene Almazan Law, LLC
Rene Averitt-Sanzone, The Parents' Place of Maryland
Linda Barton, MSED, Education Consultant
Beth Benevides, Autism Society of Maryland, Co-Chairperson, Education Advocacy Coalition
Ellen A. Callegary, Attorney (Retired)
Melanie Carlos, xMinds (Partnership for Extraordinary Minds)
Stephanie Carr, S.L. Carr Education Consultants, LLC
Rich Ceruolo, Parent
Michelle Davis, M.Ed., ABCs for Life Success
Jennifer Engel Fisher, M.S., Weinfeld Education Group
Lisa Frank and Andrea Bennett, Special Kids Company
Riya Gupta, Strong Schools Maryland
Beth Ann Hancock, Charting the Course, LLC
Kalman Hettleman, Independent Advocate
Morgan Durand Horvath, M.Ed., Abilities Network
Stacy Ganz Kahn, Educational Resources Group of Greater Washington
Rosemary Kitzinger and Marjorie Guldan, Bright Futures, LLC
Ande Kolp, The Arc Maryland
Rachel London, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council
Leslie Seid Margolis, Disability Rights Maryland, Co-Chairperson, Education Advocacy Coalition
Monica Martinez, Martinez Advocacy
Beth Nolan, MAT, Education Team Allies
Sumaiya Olatunde, H2D Counseling
Ellen O'Neill, Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center
Ronza Othman, National Federation of the Blind of Maryland/Maryland Parents of Blind Children
Kate Raab and Nicole Joseph, Law Office of Nicole Joseph
Jaime Seaton, BGS Law, LLC

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Ronnetta Stanley, M.Ed., Loud Voices Together

Wayne Steedman, Steedman Law Group

Guy Stephens, Alliance Against Seclusion and Restraint

Maureen van Stone, Kendall Eaton, Genevieve Hornik, Project HEAL at Kennedy Krieger
Institute

Winifred Winston, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland

Liz Zogby, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition

The Maryland Education Coalition also joins this testimony.

SB 482 - Right to Teach Act - Oppose.pdf

Uploaded by: Sam Mathias

Position: UNF

BILL: Senate Bill 482
TITLE: Public Middle and High Schools – Student Discipline (Right to Teach Act of 2025)
HEARING DATE: February 21, 2025
POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
CONTACT: Sam Mathias, Legal & Policy Services Director
(smathias@mabe.org)

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state’s local boards of education, **opposes Senate Bill 482, Public Middle and High Schools – Student Discipline (Right to Teach Act of 2025).**

SB 482 authorizes teachers to invoke a student disciplinary process in response to student behavior that may not conform to policies adopted by their local board of education, effectively removing local control from boards of education in favor of each classroom teacher executing their own policy.

Every local board of education places a high priority on establishing policies and procedures concerning student discipline. This is by design, based on the framework established by the General Assembly and the State Board of Education. State law reflects the legislature’s recognition that principals and superintendents have broad discretion to make student discipline decisions (see Section 7-305 of the Education Article). Moreover, the state’s regulatory framework assigns local boards of education “the responsibility and authority to adopt policies designed to create safe schools” (COMAR 13A.08.01.09). It is thus paramount to both consistency and the regulatory framework that local boards of education establish and implement policies concerning student rights, responsibilities, and educationally appropriate disciplinary and behavioral responses when school policies are violated.

SB 482 undermines this important local control. Questions about when and whether to remove a student from the classroom are set by district policy. SB 482 overrides that policy.

Additionally, SB 482 misunderstands the nature of restorative practices by stating that after a student is removed from class, a guidance counselor may “discipline” a student using restorative approaches. This fundamentally misunderstands restorative practices in key ways:

- **Restorative Practices Are Not Discipline** – The language of the statute suggests that a guidance counselor is expected to discipline a student using restorative approaches. However, restorative practices are not a form of punishment; they are

meant to repair harm, rebuild relationships, and address root causes of behavior. Framing them as discipline undermines their intent.

- **Restorative Practices Aim to Keep Students in Class** – Effective restorative approaches prioritize keeping students engaged in learning rather than removing them from instructional time. If a student is sent to a guidance counselor as a response to behavior, as this bill proposes, it turns restorative practices into an exclusionary measure, contradicting their goal.

For the reasons outlined above, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 482.