



**PSSAM**  
Public School Superintendents' Association  
OF MARYLAND

**Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director**  
1217 S. Potomac Street  
Baltimore, MD 21224  
410-935-7281  
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

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**BILL:** HB 773

**TITLE:** Public Middle and High Schools - Student Discipline (Right to Teach Act of 2025)

**DATE:** March 3, 2025

**POSITION:** Unfavorable

**COMMITTEE:** House Ways and Means Committee

**CONTACT:** Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 773.

This bill authorizes a teacher in a public middle or high school in the State to remove a student from the classroom under specified conditions. If a teacher removes a student from the classroom, the teacher must document the student's behavior, submit the documentation to the principal, and send the student to the school principal or guidance counselor. A local board of education may not take disciplinary action against a teacher who removes a student from a classroom. The bill specifies actions a principal may take when a student is sent to the principal and requires a teacher's consent to return a student to the classroom, unless the principal, school counselor, and teacher determine that the placement is the best or only option available. The bill likewise requires the school counselor to discipline students sent to the school counselor using restorative approaches according to current law. The bill shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

PSSAM opposes HB 773 because it would grant teachers the authority to initiate a student disciplinary process based on behavior that may not align with the policies established by their local board of education.

Superintendents strongly believe that locally governed education policies and procedures, including those related to student discipline, should remain under the authority of boards of education. Each board must have the flexibility to develop policies and practices that address the unique and diverse needs of their community. Local superintendents are committed to upholding strict and comprehensive student discipline and school safety policies, with a focus on preventing

and addressing bullying, verbal threats, student fights, and other disruptive behaviors that can impede effective teaching and learning and potentially escalate into more serious incidents.

PSSAM also advocates for the integration of restorative approaches in Maryland's public schools. These researched and proactive approaches, supported by professional development and training for all staff, contribute to fostering positive and healthy school environments that help students learn from their mistakes and grow.

Legislation passed in 2019 mandates that local boards of education update their student discipline policies to incorporate restorative practices. This defines "restorative approaches" as a relationship-focused student discipline model that (1) is preventative and proactive; (2) emphasizes building strong relationships and setting clear behavioral expectations that contribute to the well-being of the school community; (3) in response to behavior that violates the clear behavioral expectations that contribute to the well-being of the school community, focuses on accountability for any harm done by the problem behavior; and (4) addresses ways to repair the relationships affected by the problem behavior with the voluntary participation of an individual who was harmed. "Restorative approaches" may include conflict resolution, mediation, peer mediation, circle processes, restorative conferences, social-emotional learning, trauma-informed care, positive behavioral intervention supports, and rehabilitation.

Local superintendents remain dedicated to ensuring that school discipline is applied effectively, supporting the overarching goal of preparing all Maryland students to be college and career-ready.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 773 and requests an **unfavorable report**.