

Education Advocacy Coalition
for Students with Disabilities

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 488: Public Schools--Discipline

Date: February 12, 2025

POSITION: SUPPORT

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, supports House Bill 488, which addresses the collection and publication of discipline-related data. EAC members represent or work with students with disabilities across the state who are subjected to exclusionary discipline at a disproportionate rate. According to 2023-24 data, students with disabilities comprise 13% of the students enrolled in Maryland public schools but 27% of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions.

If enacted, House Bill 488 would extend reporting requirements to alternative schools and programs and to public separate special education day schools and would also lower the risk ratio currently used to identify disproportionality based on race/ethnicity, disability status, and English language ability. These measures would create accountability for the use of exclusionary discipline practices and would enable local school systems and the Maryland State Department of Education to better disaggregate and then use data to inform a corrective action plan if needed.

EAC members appreciate House Bill 488's requirement that discipline-related data be made public in an accessible and disaggregated electronic spreadsheet format as a data download on the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)'s website at the state level, the local school system level, and the individual school level. This will make it easier for interested members of the public to find, review and analyze the data collected by MSDE. EAC members also support House Bill 488's requirement that MSDE submit annual reports and an annual action plan to address disproportionality.

For these reasons, the EAC supports House Bill 488.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Selene A. Almazan, Selene Almazan Law, LLC
Rene Averitt-Sanzone, The Parents' Place of Maryland
Linda Barton, MSED, Education Advocate
Beth Benevides, Autism Society of Maryland
Melanie Carlos, xMinds (Partnership for Extraordinary Minds)

Education Advocacy Coalition Testimony: House Bill 488

February 12, 2025

Page Two

Rich Ceruolo, Parent

Jennifer Engel Fisher, Weinfeld Education Group

Lisa Frank and Andrea Bennett, The Special Kids Company

Beth Ann Hancock, Charting the Course, LLC

Stacy Ganz Kahn, Educational Resources Group of Greater Washington

Ande Kolp, The Arc Maryland

Rosemary Kitzinger and Marjorie Guldán, Bright Futures, LLC

Rachel London, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

Leslie Seid Margolis, Disability Rights Maryland, Co-Chairperson

Mark B. Martin, Law Offices of Mark B. Martin, P.A.

Monica Martinez, Martinez Advocacy

Beth Nolan, Education Team Allies

Sumaiya Olatunde, H2D Counseling

Ellen O'Neill, Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center

Ronza Othman, National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

Kate Raab and Nicole Joseph, Law Office of Nicole Joseph

Rebecca Rienzi, Pathfinders for Autism

Jaime Seaton, BGS Law, LLC

Karleen Spitulnik, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland

Ronnetta Stanley, Loud Voices Together

Guy Stephens, Alliance Against Seclusion and Restraint

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