



Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 10, 2025

House Bill 488: Public Schools – Discipline-Related Data- Collection and Publication

Letter of Support

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists in Maryland. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state.

House Bill 488 requires Maryland schools to make public all discipline-related data, disaggregated by grade level, race, ethnicity, disability status, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, and gender, related to disproportional disciplinary practices of a local school system or a public school. Additionally, House Bill 488 requires schools identified as “high suspending” or disproportionate to submit a plan to the state board to reduce or eliminate the disproportionate impact of exclusionary discipline practices. We know that exclusionary discipline practices disproportionately impact historically disadvantaged students, such as students with disabilities, BIPOC students, and students from lower SES backgrounds (Losen, Martinez, and Gillespie, 2012)¹. We also know that suspension does not work as a teaching tool. It causes students to lose instructional time, pushing them further behind, increases drop out rates, is correlated with an increase in risk-taking behaviors, and is correlated with involvement in the criminal legal system (ACLU, 2019). Parents, community members, and students deserve to know the discipline data for their schools and communities, and every child deserves the right to access education.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2018) reports that exclusionary discipline practices may temporarily suppress unwanted behavior while increasing the likelihood of being arrested, poor academic performance, and dropping out of school. Recommendations from NASP include increasing positive behavior interventions and supports, social-emotional learning, restorative practices, and increasing a positive school climate to both prevent disciplinary concerns and respond to concerns when they arise.

MSPA supports House Bill 488, including the publication of discipline data for public access and the requirement for schools that are “high suspending” or have a disproportionate impact to submit a plan to the state board. If we can provide any additional information or be of any assistance, please contact us at legislative@mspaonline.org or Sarah Peters at speters@hbsstrategies.us or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,

Bradley Leposa PHD NCSP
Chair, Legislative Committee
Maryland School Psychologists' Association

¹ Losen, Daniel J., Tia Martinez, and Jon Gillespie, Suspended Education in California, Los Angeles, Calif.: The Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the UCLA Civil Rights Project, April 10, 2012. As of January 24, 2025: <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/summary-reports/suspended-education-in-california/SuspendedEd-final3.pdf>

² ACLU, “How do suspension & expulsion impact students, schools, and community?” February 2019. As of February 10, 2025: [aclu_factsheet_howsuspensionexpulsionimpact_feb2019.pdf](https://www.aclu.org/factsheet/how-suspension-expulsion-impact-students-schools-and-community-feb2019)

³ National Association of School Psychologists. (2018). Effective school discipline policies and practices: Supporting student learning [Research summary]. Bethesda, MD