



DATE: February 10, 2025 **COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means
BILL NO: HB488
BILL TITLE: Public Schools- Discipline Related Data- Collection and Publication
POSITION: Support

Project HEAL supports House Bill 488 – Public Schools- Discipline- Related Data- Collection and Publication.

Bill Summary:

House Bill 488 collects data from schools and establishes an accessible and disaggregated electronic spreadsheet of all discipline-related data as a data download on the State Department of Education Department's website at the state level, local school system level, and school level.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger Institute provides specialized services to patients nationally and internationally. Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental, behavioral, cognitive, and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger's services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based and community-based programs.

The Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities (MCDD) at Kennedy Krieger Institute is proud to be Maryland's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) and a member of the national Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). Project HEAL (Health, Education, Advocacy, and Law) is a community-based program of the MCDD that provides comprehensive advocacy and civil legal services, including in special education matters, for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Rationale:

Project HEAL supports increased transparency of and public access to disaggregated discipline-related data on the State Department of Education's website at the State level, local school system level, and school level. Currently the Department collects and publishes data for out-of-school suspensions and expulsions Statewide and by county. In the 2023-2024 school year, there were 68,588 out-of-school suspensions and expulsions throughout the state of Maryland. Currently, this data is merely disaggregated by race, gender, type of incident, and county.

At Project HEAL, we hear from parents and guardians struggling with a child's out-of-school suspension or expulsion. The child is missing education, access to services, has a mark on their permanent record, and may struggle with returning to school. Parents and/or guardians may struggle finding childcare for while students are out of school. Disruptive out-of-school suspensions and expulsions should not be overused in lieu of restorative and remedial consequences.

This Bill allows the Department and public to identify local schools in which the school's discipline process has a disproportionate impact on students with minority status, disability status, or English language proficiency status. The Bill directs the Department to provide local education agencies with support and resources to reduce disparities in discipline. This ensures that resources and funds are effectively used.

Project HEAL at Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on House Bill 488.

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