



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: HB 1265
TITLE: Juveniles - Arrests for Reportable Offenses
DATE: March 5, 2025
POSITION: Favorable with Amendment
COMMITTEE: House Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports** House Bill 1265 **with amendments**.

This bill alters certain provisions relating to notification to certain school personnel of the arrest of a student for a certain reportable offense and requires the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) and the State Department of Education to develop an operational protocol to guide the transmission of reportable offense information.

PSSAM supports an amendment that the DJS is introducing to include our organization in the workgroup established in Section 2a to develop an operational protocol to guide the transmission of information as required in this bill. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to participate in this workgroup as we are a major stakeholder in these efforts. ***However, we believe the workgroup's scope should be expanded to seek resolution on additional items related to information sharing;*** we have outlined some of the additional issues to consider below.

To ensure the highest standards of safety for schools, it is imperative that information regarding students' criminal involvement and interactions with law enforcement is appropriately shared with school personnel. The current flow of information between law enforcement and schools is disjointed and needs to be vastly improved. This legislation would help provide school administration with important information when making educational placement decisions, but again, more is needed than just this legislation.

PSSAM believes the following additional issues should be addressed and considered in developing the most effective public policy regarding the implementation of the Reportable Offenses statute.

- More appropriate and comprehensive information regarding juveniles who transfer between local school systems, including programs hosted by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) and the Juvenile Services Education Program and Board (JSEP);
- Expanding information shared by law enforcement to local superintendents or school systems within twenty-four hours of any arrest of a student with details pertaining to school safety, including whether any victims were students and the type of weapon(s) involved if applicable.

Further, enhancements to the “reportable offenses” law should include the tools necessary for seamless communication between education systems, and allow for a central repository via the Maryland State Department of Education or a similarly appropriate entity. For instance, often a local superintendent, school security personnel, or a school principal will receive information as described in the current reportable offenses statute for a student that is NOT currently enrolled in that county. LEAs do not have the information to notify the appropriate district where the student is enrolled. To fill this communication gap:

- Information should be promptly shared with the MSDE (or an appropriate central repository) to facilitate notification of the school or jurisdiction of attendance. Local superintendents and districts are not privy to statewide attendance records and this information must be coordinated at the State level.

We also support the concept of “mandatory information sharing among local superintendents” that was embedded in the emergency regulations passed by the State Board of Education in the fall of 2024. However, to reiterate, local superintendents and school personnel do not have access to the necessary data sources to know where a student has transferred.

In addition, there are many cases where a juvenile under the supervision and jurisdiction of the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) is transferred to a LEA but no information is shared about the student’s individual circumstances, or the student’s previous educational setting. Therefore, the law must be amended to compel the DJS to:

- Notify the local superintendent and the principal of a school in which the student is enrolled, or which that student has been transferred, of the student’s reportable offense or offense that is related to the student’s membership in a criminal organization, the disposition of the offense, and the law enforcement report or description of the offenses including details pertinent to school safety, including whether any victims were student and the type of weapon(s) involved, if applicable.

Local superintendents support increased communication between law enforcement and the appropriate, but limited, school personnel needed to ensure the safety of students in school settings, as well as protecting the privacy and due process of those awaiting disposition of criminal investigations.

Again, we respectfully request that the Committee direct all entities involved in the implementation of this statute to work together to create an integrated system that ensures seamless and predictable communication. This information-sharing is integral to ensure proper physical safeguards in school buildings, while also protecting student confidentiality, and allowing due process for all parties involved. We appreciate this Committee's examination of these important education and safety issues and look forward to continued dialogue on this, and other related legislation.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** House Bill 1265 with **an amendment** to create the work group outlined above.