

**BILL:** House Bill 198  
**TITLE:** School Systems - Reportable Offenses – Notification of Student as Suspect  
**HEARING DATE:** February 11, 2026  
**POSITION:** Letter of Information  
**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means / Judiciary  
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all the state’s local boards of education, provides this informational letter for **House Bill 198 – School Systems - Reportable Offenses – Notification of Student as Suspect**.

House Bill 198 would require law enforcement to notify the State’s Attorney within 24 hours whenever a student between the ages of 5 and 22 is identified as a suspect in an investigation of conduct that would constitute a felony or crime of violence if committed by an adult, and would authorize the State’s Attorney to notify a local school system designee.

Unlike other reportable offense bills and the current law, this bill would trigger notification based solely on suspect status, rather than at arrest, formal charge, or adjudication, thus shifting information sharing to a very early stage of an investigation, when facts are often preliminary and subject to change. MABE notes the problematic nature of that threshold.

In addition, MABE respectfully notes that the issues raised in House Bill 198 are currently the subject of active, coordinated statewide review through the [Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform and Emerging Best Practices](#). Through its Juvenile Justice Processes and Systems Coordination Workgroup, which is comprised of members of the General Assembly, sheriffs, judges, school superintendents, mental health advocates, representatives of the Department of Juvenile Services, and other key stakeholders, the Commission is examining issues related to the reporting and sharing of information concerning student offenses.

As we understand, the workgroup continues to meet and is in the process of developing a work plan that to address, among other areas:

- Establishing uniform, statewide processes for law enforcement and State’s Attorney notifications;
- Creating a consistent framework for sharing reportable offense information from arrest through disposition;

- Addressing information gaps that arise during student transfers;
- Identifying any statutory or regulatory changes needed to support timely and consistent information sharing; and
- Ensuring that any recommended processes appropriately balance confidentiality protections with school safety, coordination, and student services.

MABE offers this information to make the General Assembly aware of the Commission's ongoing good faith work as legislation related to juvenile offenses and information-sharing is considered during this session. Given the complexity of these issues surrounding sharing sensitive information; the need to align education, juvenile justice, and law enforcement systems; and the good-faith, ongoing, collaborative work of the Commission, MABE respectfully encourages consideration to allow the Commission's work to proceed and inform any legislative action in this area.