



Date: February 11, 2026

Bill Number/Title: HB 198 - School Systems - Reportable Offenses - Notification of Student as Suspect

Committee: House Ways and Means Committee

Board Position: Unfavorable

The Juvenile Services Education Board respectfully requests an unfavorable report to House Bill 198.

In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly passed SB 497/CH 147, which created the Juvenile Services Education Board and Program (JSEP). This law transferred the responsibility for educating youth in the custody of the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to the newly established, independent JSEP Board.

Currently, JSEP neither receives nor transmits any reportable offense records and does not store, record, request, or transmit any information regarding a student's alleged criminal activity.

HB 198 raises issues that extend beyond JSEP and are within the scope of ongoing statewide juvenile justice work through the Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform and Emerging and Best Practices. The Commission is charged with examining juvenile justice policy, equity impacts, system coordination, and making recommendations grounded in research.

The Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform and Emerging Best Practices is currently leading a collaborative process through its system process workgroup, focused on:

- Establishing a standardized statewide process for law enforcement to notify Local Education Agencies (LEAs) of arrests for reportable offenses, including cases where the arrest occurs outside the student's home school district;
- Developing a uniform protocol for State's Attorney notifications to LEAs regarding case dispositions across jurisdictions;
- Addressing information gaps when students transfer between LEAs or transition between DJS, JSEP, and community schools; and
- Standardizing the overall flow of information from arrest through disposition in a way that protects confidentiality while supporting school safety.

A JSEP Board member will represent JSEP as part of the workgroup process. The JSEP Board respectfully requests an unfavorable report on HB 198 and urges the Committee to allow the Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform and Emerging and Best Practices to convene and provide informed recommendations on this issue.

Contact: Dr. David Pinder, JSEP Superintendent, david.pinder@maryland.gov

