



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: HB 198
TITLE: School Systems - Reportable Offenses - Notification of Student as Suspect
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POSITION: Letter of Information
COMMITTEE: House Ways and Means & Judiciary Committees
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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, provides this **Letter of Information** regarding House Bill 198.

This bill requires that a law enforcement agency notify the State's Attorney when a student is a suspect in an investigation of an act that, if committed by an adult, would be a felony or crime of violence, as specified, and makes conforming changes to reporting requirements related to reportable offenses. (https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2026RS/fnotes/bil_0008/hb0198.pdf)

The public education system in Maryland is responsible for providing a free and appropriate education for every student in the State. Local superintendents take this responsibility very seriously and balance the tremendous duty to educate, with the need to provide a safe and supportive educational setting for students and staff. 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.*

We appreciate the sponsor's keen interest in this issue and this legislation, but we believe the Legislature should take a more comprehensive approach on the issues of information sharing regarding students' criminal behavior. To that end, we are happy to support the workgroup on *Juvenile Justice Processes and Systems Coordination* that is part of the The Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform & Emerging Best Practices. This workgroup is actively taking up many of the concerns of PSSAM and our LEA partners on the issue of reportable offenses and information sharing.

Specifically, the workgroup has developed an action plan that is expected to address the following areas:

- Establishing a standardized statewide process for law enforcement notifications;
- Establishing a standardized statewide process for State's Attorney notifications;
- Addressing information gaps during student transfers; and,
- Standardizing the overall flow of information.

More specifically, the workgroup is focused on:

- Developing a uniform, statewide process for sharing reportable offense information from arrest through disposition;
- Recommending any statutory or regulatory changes needed to ensure information reaches the appropriate individuals in a timely and consistent manner; and,
- Ensuring the process appropriately protects confidentiality while supporting school safety, coordination, and student services.

Last session PSSAM advocated for the creation of such a workgroup and we are confident that the group's comprehensive stakeholder representation will facilitate thoughtful, collaborative work and result in consensus legislation for the 2027 legislative session.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this **Letter of Information** on House Bill 198.