



Maryland Education Coalition



INSPIRES ACTION & POSITIVE CHANGE SO MARYLAND'S STUDENTS SUCCEED

Rick Tyler, Jr., Chair

Web site - www.marylandeducationcoalition.org *** Email – md.education.coaliton@gmail.com

Date: February 24, 2021

BILL: House Bill 1166

POSITION: Support

TITLE: Education – Physical Restraint and Seclusion –

Requirements, Reporting, and Training

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) is made up of twenty statewide organizations and several individuals with decades of experience and expertise including several groups that support students with disabilities. We have advocated for adequate, equitable funding and policies as well as systematic accountability for over 40-years. We believe a public education is a constitutional right allowing all students equitable access to a quality public education so each may graduate college or career-ready. We also believe it is a civil right.

Consistent with MEC’s commitment to equity for students in Maryland, we join the Educational Advocacy Coalition, Disability Rights Maryland, and others in supporting House Bill 1166. This important bill addresses the barriers that have prevented Maryland from making significant strides overall in reducing the use of restraint and seclusion in schools. These aversive interventions are used disproportionately with students of color and students with disabilities.

For example, according to the Maryland State Department of Education’s December 1, 2019 report to the General Assembly, “Restraint and Seclusion: Data Collection, Findings, and Recommendations”, local school systems, other public agencies and nonpublic schools reported a total of 19,713 restraint incidents, 14,807 (75%) involved students of color. 18,307 (93%) of the incidents involved students with disabilities. The report noted a total of 9532 seclusion incidents, 6981 (73%) involving students of color and 9348 (98%) of which involved students with disabilities. Further, the vast majority of restraint and seclusion incidents involved elementary school-aged students who were male.

The 2019-20 data is similar, even though the in-person school year was cut short when buildings closed because of the coronavirus pandemic. Out of a total of 12,310 reported restraint incidents, 8429 (68%) involved students of color and the vast majority involved elementary school-aged boys with disabilities. Similarly, out of a total of 6487 seclusion incidents, 5447 (84%) involved students of color, most of whom were elementary school-aged students with disabilities.

Almost nobody has escaped the pandemic unscathed in some way. Particularly as students begin to return to school buildings for in-person learning, it is critical that trauma-informed practices guide instruction and behavior intervention. House Bill 1166 would require additional professional development grounded in trauma-informed care and would additionally require data analysis and accountability by the Maryland State Department of Education, a necessary component of changing practice in Maryland. Students should not return to school fearing that they will be thrown to the ground and held down or dragged into a room and isolated if they struggle to re-acclimate to the routine and structure of school.

For these reasons and those outlined in the testimony of the other supporters of House Bill 1166, MEC strongly supports this Bill.

Respectfully yours,
Rick Tyler, Jr. Chair

Advocates for Children and Youth, American Civil Liberties Union of MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Arts Every Day, Attendance Works, CASA, Decoding Dyslexia of MD, Disability Rights Maryland, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, Right to Read Maryland, Maryland PTA, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Ed, Maryland Out of School Time Network, MSC-NAACP, Maryland School Psychologists' Association, Parent Advocacy Consortium, Public Justice Center, School Social Workers of MD, Barbara Dezmon, Kalam Hettleman, David Hornbeck, Rick Tyler, Jr., Shamoyia Gardiner, Sharon Rubinstein