



HB171 STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - SCHOOL DISCIPLINE - DATA COLLECTION

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EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

LETTER OF INFORMATION

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) is submitting a letter of information on **HB171 State Department of Education - School Discipline - Data Collection**. This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to disaggregate discipline-related data in an electronic spreadsheet format for the Maryland Report Card and provide the discipline-related data to the public in an accessible electronic spreadsheet format. The bill would also require MSDE to lower the risk ratio used to identify a school as high suspending from 3.0 to 2.0.

The AACPS Instructional Data Division collects, analyzes, and applies instructional data to assist students, teachers, instructional leaders, parents and the public. The goal is to enhance learning and positively impact student achievement. At AACPS, student achievement data is analyzed to identify relationships between different types of student achievement measures; and predicting student performance in order to better identify appropriate instructional strategies to address the needs of our students.

Currently, disaggregated student discipline data are currently posted on the MSDE website. State regulations require MSDE to develop a method to analyze local school system discipline data to determine whether there is a disproportionate impact on minority students. MSDE may use the discrepancy model to assess the impact of discipline on special education students. If MSDE identifies a school's discipline process as having a disproportionate impact on minority students or a discrepant impact on special education students, the local school system must prepare and present to the State Board of Education a plan to reduce the impact within one year and eliminate it within three years. A local school system must report its progress annually to the State Board. When presented to the State Board of Education in January 2017, the State Board determined that 3.0 would be the threshold for disproportionality in Maryland. Accordingly, we have concerns that HB171 would lower the ratio to 2.0.

In addition, we have concerns with the definition of high suspending schools. As with disproportionality, it is important to be very careful with small student groups. According to this bill, an elementary school with 1 student suspended out of 10 would be labeled "high-suspending."

Finally, it is important to note that alternative schools and special programs work with unique students by design and should never be compared to comprehensive schools. These schools face challenges and needs that far exceed any comprehensive school. As such, if you take all the students who are struggling behaviorally and put them in the same school or program, the data is going to be disproportionate because the population is disproportionate. Alternative schools and special programs do such wonderful work for students and families and including them in this legislation would have such a negative impact on the hard work that these schools and their staff do every single day.

Thank you for consideration of this information regarding HB171.