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BILL: House Bill 1222
TITLE: Maryland School Discipline Reform Act
DATE: February 28, 2017
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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House Bill 1222 requires each county board of education to adopt the Maryland Guidelines for a State Code of Discipline as the code of discipline for the local school system; requiring the State Department of Education to disaggregate data in any student discipline data report in a specified manner; requiring the Department to collect data on alternative school discipline practices; requiring the Department to implement standardized training practices on student discipline for all public school security personnel on or before July 1, 2018.

PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 1222. This proposed legislation is not needed or necessary.

Local superintendents are committed to creating school systems where teaching and learning take place every day in safe, supportive, and respectful school environments. To that end, local superintendents strictly adhere to the Maryland Guidelines for a State Code of Conduct.

The Maryland Guidelines for a State Code of Conduct were revised and adopted by the State Board in 2014. The revision was a statewide effort to reform school discipline and provides a framework for local school systems to use in establishing local codes of conduct and in developing new discipline-related policies. The guidelines include behavioral expectations for all members of the school community who have a direct impact on creating healthy teaching and learning environments. They also provide suggested prevention, intervention, restorative, and incentive-based strategies to respond to student misconduct, detailed explanations of specific student behaviors that are not permitted, and other factors for school systems to consider in revising their policies. The guidelines were written in accordance with state law and the Code of Maryland Regulations.

Local school systems collect and report disaggregated data to the Maryland State Department of Education and evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of their codes of conduct annually. Based on this review, local school systems identify areas of concern and provide additional supports, services, and professional development to schools and school staff accordingly. Both the data and any findings from its analysis are shared with students, families, and the community.

In addition, the Maryland Center for School Safety was created in 2013 to provide training, technical assistance, resources, and evaluation services to school systems and other organizations. Among their responsibilities, the Center works collaboratively with the Maryland Association of School Officers to ensure that all officers have been formally trained. School resource officers also meet monthly with representatives of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 1222.