



Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair
Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Vice Chair
House Office Building, Room 101
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

House Bill 1546 – Education – Reportable Offenses – Alterations

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and Judiciary Committee Members:

We are writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 school psychologists across the state. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across Maryland.

The purpose of this letter is to provide our support for House Bill 1546 – Reportable Offenses-Alterations, which is scheduled for hearing on February 27, 2020. This bill modifies existing statutes related to public school students who are charged with certain criminal acts off campus (*charged, but not yet adjudicated*).

This bill removes some nonviolent offenses from the list of reportable charges, shifts reporting requirements away from local law enforcement to the State's Attorney office, allows for more flexibility in reporting based on individual circumstances (*may* rather than *shall*), and clarifies educational and due process rights of these students.

The current statutes grant a great deal of autonomy to local board policies in how to respond to reports of a crime committed off-campus. Discussion with our organization's members indicated a wide array of policies across LEAs as well as frequently changing policies within districts. In particular, we support provisions of this bill that appropriately involve all stakeholders in these often difficult and complex decisions:

- Involving school Student Support Teams, which include students and parents, in considering a student's educational needs
- Requiring that school teams attempt to provide supports if at all possible to keep the student in school, while mitigating risks to other students from alleged involvement in the offense
- Requiring input from the IEP or 504 Team for students with disabilities in order to consider and ensure the provision of a free and appropriate public education
- Only allowing removal from a student's regular school in cases that pose an imminent risk of serious harm to others

MSPA supports House Bill 1546 – Reportable Offenses-Alterations, and we respectfully urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any additional information, or be of any assistance, please contact us at legislative@mSPAonline.org.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chair, Legislative Committee
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