



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 277 – State Department of Education - Guidelines on Trauma-Informed Approach

SPONSOR: Delegate Wilkins, *et al.*

HEARING DATE: February 5, 2020

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 277**. This legislation will establish the Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative in the Maryland State Department of Education for the purpose of expanding the use of trauma-informed approaches in schools and intensively training schools on becoming trauma-informed schools.

There are several reasons that that a trauma-informed approach should be instituted in as many schools as possible. Studies indicate that between half and two-thirds of all students have experienced some type of trauma.¹ Trauma informed teachers and staff are aware of trauma's impact on students' behavior, their relationships, their potential inability to self-regulate behavior, and how all these factors could directly affect their classroom behavior.² An educator trained in the trauma-informed approach is prepared to address students who manifest, through behavior, their need for support. Along with supporting academic progress, a teacher that is trauma informed provides a safe, secure, and caring classroom environment that can ultimately address the needs of the whole student.³

The potential positive impacts that this approach can have on students is well worth passing this legislation: significant improvements in behavior, fewer suspensions, fewer expulsions, and significant improvements in academic achievement. These are

¹ Maura McInerney & Amy McKlindon, *Unlocking the Door to Learning: Trauma-Informed Classrooms & Transformational Schools* (Ed. Law Center, Dec. 2014), <https://www.elc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Trauma-Informed-in-Schools-Classrooms-FINAL-December2014-2.pdf>.

² *Id.* at 1.

³ *Id.* at 6.

results that Prince George’s County wholeheartedly supports.⁴ Establishing the Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative in the Maryland State Department of Education is a productive and necessary first step in identifying and addressing the needs of students that are coping with trauma and the challenges that flow from growing up in those environments.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George’s County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 277** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.

⁴ Crisis Prevention Institute, “How Trauma-Informed Schools Help Every Student Succeed,” <https://www.crisisprevention.com/Blog/October-2018/Trauma-Informed-Schools> (last visited Feb. 5, 2020).