Alternative School Discipline Practices:

Data Collection, Findings, and Considerations
2023-2024 School Year

MSAR # 12199

Annotated Code § 7-306(e)(1)

Maryland
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Background

The Annotated Code of Maryland Education Article § 7-306 requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to collect data on alternative school discipline practices in public schools for each local education agency (LEA), including: (i) the type of alternative school discipline practices that are used in an LEA; and (ii) the type of misconduct for which an alternative discipline practice is used.

During the 2019 legislative session, House Bill 725-Public Schools-Student Discipline-Restorative Approaches (Chapter 691) was passed, amending Education Article § 7-306. The amended legislation defines restorative approaches as "a relationship-focused student discipline model" and requires MSDE to submit an annual student discipline data report, on or before October 1, to the Governor and the General Assembly that includes a description of the uses of restorative approaches in the State and a review of disciplinary practices and policies in the State. Additionally, the amended legislation specifies that MSDE shall disaggregate the information in any student discipline data report prepared by the Department by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, eligibility for free or reduced price meals or an equivalent measure of socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, and type of discipline for: (i) the State; (ii) each LEA; and (iii) each public school.

MSDE will provide disaggregated student discipline data based on the categorizations outlined in the legislation in the annual Maryland Public School Suspensions by School and Major Offense Category: In-School Suspensions, Out-of-School Suspensions, and Expulsions report. The Alternative School Discipline Practices: Data Collection, Findings, and Considerations report focuses specifically on alternative school discipline practices. This report describes the data collection process, provides statewide summary data based on LEA responses, and outlines findings and considerations based on an analysis of the data.

Alternative school discipline practices are defined in Education Article § 7-306 as "a discipline practice used in a public school that is not an in-school or an out-of-school suspension." Currently, responsibility for defining discipline practices for specific code of conduct infractions and determining which disciplinary practices are utilized rests with individual LEAs. MSDE has provided support and guidance to LEAs on alternative disciplinary approaches through collaborative partnerships with experts such as the Center for Dispute Resolution at the University of Maryland (C-DRUM) and the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Maryland collaborative, the publication of documents such as The Maryland Guidelines for State Code of Discipline, professional learning experiences conducted by MSDE specialists specifically in the area of alternative discipline approaches, and direct technical support to LEAs as they implement strategies to eliminate disproportionate disciplinary removals. MSDE has also provided training in restorative practices using grant funds from Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Grant of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Data Collection

To obtain data on the use of alternative discipline practices in Maryland public schools, MSDE staff developed an online survey, drawing on existing statewide guidance and current terminology. The survey is typically completed by the Directors of Student Services in each LEA. The Director of Student Services is the LEA administrator who is generally most knowledgeable about central office guidance on discipline and school discipline practices. All 24 LEAs in Maryland completed the survey for the 2023-2024 school year.

The survey is comprised of two parts. Part one asked LEAs the degree to which school administrators used the following five alternative discipline practices/approaches, including communication practices, skill development practices, restorative approaches, referral practices, and consequence practices.

For each question in part one, the following five response options were available:

- Never;

- Less than half of the time;

- About half of the time;

- More than half of the time; or

- Always.

Part two asked LEAs to indicate which alternative school discipline practices/approaches (as identified in part one) the LEA used in response to the following types of student misconduct, as defined in the 2019 report by the Institute of Education Science's (IES) Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic titled Disproportionality in School Discipline: An Assessment in Maryland Through 2018:

- Attendance infractions (class cutting, tardiness, and truancy);

- Conduct infractions (disrespect, disruption, academic dishonesty, dress code violations, inappropriate use of personal electronics, trespassing, and destruction of property);

- Drugs and alcohol infractions (being under the influence/in possession of, or selling alcohol, inhalants, or controlled substances);

- Sexual misconduct infractions (sexual harassment, attacks, or activity); and

- Violent infractions (possession or use of firearms, explosives, or other weapons; threatening or attacking an adult or student; fighting; extortion; bullying and harassment; arson; and bomb threats).

Findings

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE DATA BY THE DEGREE TO WHICH A PRACTICE/APPROACH IS USED

Please note that the data for part one of the survey are each represented by a single table. Tables 1 through 5 detail the degree to which each of the 24 LEAs in Maryland reported using the specified discipline practice/approach for the five alternative school discipline practices/approach categories listed (communication practices, skill development practices, restorative approaches, referral practices, and consequence practices), displaying both the percentage and the number of LEAs responding to each item for the 2023-2024 school year.

For the following narratives, the term "high frequency" refers to any practice or approach that was reported as being used "more than half of the time" or "always". The term "low frequency" refers to any practice or approach that was reported as being used "less than half of the time" or "never". "The majority of LEAs" refers to at least 70% of Maryland LEAs.

Communication Practices

With regard to the use of communication practices, all 24 LEAs indicated parent outreach at a high frequency, with 18 LEAs indicating that this practice is always used (see Table 1). There were no other high frequency practices used by the majority of LEAs. Community conference and home visit were the only practices that met the threshold for low frequency by the majority of LEAs. Twenty-three of the 2 LEAs noted using a home visit less than half the time.

Table 1. Extent to Which Communication Practices are Used Across All LEAs

Frequency of Practice	Never	Less than half of the time	About half of the time	More than half of the time	Always
Parent outreach (phone, email, text)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	25.00% (6)	75.00% (18)
Parent- and/or student- teacher conference	0% (0)	20.83% (5)	25.00% (6)	54.17% (13)	0% (0)
Parent- and/or student- administrator conference	0% (0)	12.50% (3)	20.83% (5)	41.67% (10)	25.00% (6)
Parent- and/or student- support staff conference	0% (0)	33.33% (8)	29.17% (7)	37.50% (9)	0% (0)

Frequency of Practice	Never	Less than half of the time	About half of the time	More than half of the time	Always
Conflict resolution conference	0% (0)	29.17% (7)	45.83% (11)	25.00% (6)	0% (0)
Community conference	0% (0)	79.17% (19)	12.50% (3)	8.33% (2)	0% (0)
Mediation conference	4.17% (1)	41.67% (10)	41.67% (10)	12.50% (3)	0% (0)
Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult	0% (0)	29.17% (7)	33.33% (8)	33.33% (8)	4.17% (1)
Daily or weekly student progress sheet (digital or paper)	0% (0)	50.00% (12)	28.083% (5)	25.00% (6)	4.17% (1)
Behavior contract	0% (0)	45.83% (11)	33.33% (8)	20.83% (5)	0% (0)
Administrator-teacher meeting related to interaction(s) with a student	0% (0)	8.33% (2)	37.50% (9)	45.83% (11)	8.33% (2)
Home visit	0% (0)	87.50% (21)	8.33% (2)	4.17% (1)	0% (0)

Skill Development Practices

Regarding the use of skill development practices, high frequency practices that the majority of LEAs reported using include Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) as a framework, review and practice of a classroom procedure, and reminder/redirection to an appropriate replacement behavior (see Table 2). Peer mediation and role play were the only skill development practices that were indicated to be used at a low frequency by the majority of LEAs.

Table 2. Extent to Which Skill Development Practices are Used Across All LEAs

Frequency of Practice	Never	Less than half of the time	About half of the time	More than half of the time	Always
Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) framework	0% (0)	8.33% (2)	4.17% (1)	50.00% (12)	33.33% (8)
Trauma-informed approaches	0% (0)	0% (0)	29.17% (7)	58.33% (14)	12.50% (3)
Review and practice of a classroom procedure	0% (0)	8.33% (2)	16.67% (4)	62.50% (15)	12.50% (3)
Reminder/redirection to an appropriate replacement behavior	0% (0)	4.17% (1)	8.33% (2)	58.33% (14)	29.17% (7)
Peer mediation*	17.39% (4)	56.52% (13)	17.39% (4)	4.35% (1)	4.35% (1)
Role play	4.17% (1)	70.83% (17)	20.83% (5)	4.17% (1)	0% (0)
Participation in a social emotional learning program	0% (0)	16.67% (4)	45.83% (11)	25.00% (6)	12.50% (3)
Participation in an academic skill development program/academic remediation*	4.35% (1)	34.78% (8)	26.09% (6)	30.43% (7)	4.35% (1)
Participation in a targeted skill session or group with a student service professional	0% (0)	58.33% (14)	29.17% (7)	12.50% (3)	0% (0)

Note: Not all 24 Maryland LEAs responded to this question.

Restorative Approaches

For the use of restorative approaches, the most frequently used restorative approaches were informal circle conversation with student and victim, with five out of 24 LEAs indicating high frequency usage and restorative conferences, with seven out of the 24 LEAs high frequency usage (see Table 3). Restitution was the least used restorative approach, with 22 LEAs indicating its use at a low frequency. Low frequency use was also indicated by a majority of LEAs for formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders and a written agreement and formal restorative circle with parents, school-based stakeholders, community member(s), and a written agreement.

Table 3. Extent to Which Restorative Approaches are Used Across All LEAs

Frequency of Practice	Never	Less than half of the time	About half of the time	More than half of the time	Always
Informal circle conversation with student and victim	0.00% (0)	62.50% (15)	16.67% (4)	16.67% (4)	4.17% (1)
Peer mediation	20.83% (5)	45.83% (11)	25.00% (6)	4.17% (1)	4.17% (1)
Other forms of mediation	0.00% (0)	58.33% (14)	29.17% (7)	8.33% (2)	4.17% (1)
Restorative conferences (the act of repairing the harm done)	0.00% (0)	37.50% (9)	33.33% (8)	25.00% (6)	4.17% (1)
Formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders and a written agreement	4.17% (1)	75.00% (18)	16.67% (4)	0.00% (0)	4.17% (1)
Formal restorative circle with parents, school-based stakeholders, community member(s), and a written agreement	8.33% (2)	79.17% (19)	8.33% (2)	0.00% (0)	4.17% (1)
Restitution	0.00% (0)	91.67% (22)	4.17% (1)	4.17% (1)	0.00% (0)

Referral Practices

Reporting about the use of referral practices found 13 out of the 24 LEAs make a referral to the Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team[1] at a high frequency (see Table 4). Referral practices reported being used at a low frequency by the majority of LEAs include referrals to complete a Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team, the school nurse or school health professional, a substance abuse counseling service, rehabilitative services, other community-based agency, a system level alternative placement, a threat assessment, and a risk assessment.

Table 4. Extent to Which Referral Practices are Used Across All LEAs

Frequency of Practice	Never	Less than half of the time	About half of the time	More than half of the time	Always
Referral to a mentoring program (in school-based or community-based agency)	0.00% (0)	54.17% (13)	25.00% (6)	16.67% (4)	4.17% (1)
Referral to the Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team*	0.00% (0)	17.39% (4)	26.09% (6)	43.48% (10)	13.04% (3)
Referral to complete a Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan	0.00% (0)	70.83% (17)	20.83% (5)	8.33% (2)	0.00% (0)
Referral to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	0.00% (0)	79.17% (19)	16.67% (4)	4.17% (1)	0.00% (0)
Referral to the school nurse or school health professional	0.00% (0)	87.50% (21)	12.50% (3)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)
Referral to a school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist	0.00% (0)	20.83% (5)	29.17% (7)	41.67% (10)	8.33% (2)

[1] *A team of school-based individuals who meet to discuss and develop a plan of intervention for students at risk.*

Frequency of Practice	Never	Less than half of the time	About half of the time	More than half of the time	Always
Referral to a school-based mental health worker	0.00% (0)	41.67% (10)	29.17% (7)	29.17% (7)	0.00% (0)
Referral to a community-based mental health agency	0.00% (0)	62.50% (15)	25.00% (6)	12.50% (3)	0.00% (0)
Referral to a substance abuse counseling service	0.00% (0)	70.83% (17)	20.83% (5)	0.00% (0)	8.33% (2)
Referral for rehabilitative services	8.33% (2)	79.17% (19)	8.33% (2)	4.17% (1)	0.00% (0)
Referral to other community-based agency*	0.00% (0)	73.91% (17)	1.045 (3)	13.04% (3)	0.00% (0)
Referral to truancy diversion panel	20.83% (5)5	58.33% (4)	8.33% (2)	8.33% (2)	4.17% (1)
Referral to a system level alternative placement*	0.00% (0)	82.61% (19)	4.35% (1)	13.04% (3)	0.00% (0)
Referral for threat assessment	0.00% (0)	73.91% (17)	21.74% (5)	4.35% (1)	0.00% (0)
Referral for risk assessment	4.17% (1)	66.67% (16)	29.17% (7)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)

*Note: Not all 24 Maryland LEAs responded to this question.

Consequence Practices

In terms of the use of consequence practices, 21 LEAs indicated that they used verbal correction at a high frequency (see Table 5). Community services, removal from extracurricular activity, Saturday school, teen court, and truancy court were the least used consequence practice. The least used consequences practice was teen court, with 23 LEAs indicating they use that practice less than half of the time or never.

Table 5. Extent to Which Consequence Practices are Used Across All LEAs

Frequency of Practice	Never	Less than half of the time	About half of the time	More than half of the time	Always
Written apology to the victim(s)	0.00% (0)	79.17% (19)	16.67% (4)	4.17% (1)	0.00% (0)
Verbal correction*	0.00% (0)	4.35% (1)	4.35% (1)	47.83% (11)	43.48% (10)
After school detention	8.33% (2)	50.00% (12)	29.17% (7)	12.50% (3)	0.00% (0)
Lunch detention	0.00% (0)	45.83% (11)	29.17% (7)	25.00% (6)	0.00% (0)
Community service	29.17% (7)	54.17% (13)	8.33% (2)	8.33% (2)	0.00% (0)
Loss of school day privilege	0.00% (0)	45.83% (11)	25.00% (6)	29.17% (7)	0.00% (0)
Loss of after school privilege	0.00% (0)	41.67% (10)	29.17% (7)	29.17% (7)	0.00% (0)
Removal from extracurricular activity	0.00% (0)	70.83% (17)	20.83% (5)	8.33% (2)	0.00% (0)
Temporary removal from class	0.00% (0)	37.50% (9)	37.50% (9)	25.00% (6)	0.00% (0)
In-school intervention	0.00% (0)	50.00% (12)	8.33% (2)	33.33% (8)	8.33% (2)
In-school suspension	20.83% (5)	45.83% (11)	20.83% (5)	12.50% (3)	0.00% (0)

Frequency of Practice	Never	Less than half of the time	About half of the time	More than half of the time	Always
Saturday school	45.83% (11)	45.83% (11)	4.17% (1)	4.17% (1)	0.00% (0)
System level conduct officer hearing	8.33% (2)	75.00% (18)	4.17% (1)	8.33% (2)	4.17% (1)
Teen court	75.00% (18)	20.83% (5)	4.17% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)
Truancy court	41.67% (10)	41.67% (10)	12.50% (3)	4.17% (1)	0.00% (0)

Note: Not all 24 Maryland LEAs responded to this question.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE DATA BY THE TYPE OF PRACTICE/APPROACH USED FOR STUDENT MISCONDUCT

Tables 6 through 10, which relate to part two of the survey, detail which alternative school discipline practices/approaches were used by LEAs during the 2023-2024 school year in response to five specific types of misconduct infractions: attendance infractions, conduct infractions, drugs and alcohol infractions, sexual misconduct infractions, and violent infractions (see Page 4 for further clarification). Please note that the data presented in this section does not indicate the frequency with which an LEA employed a particular practice/approach, but instead whether the LEA utilized such a practice/approach during the 2023-2024 school year.

For each of the five infraction categories, a narrative summarizing the data sets included with each infraction category is provided. Within each infraction category, data are displayed in five separate tables (e.g., 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, and 6.5), one table for each of the five overarching alternative school discipline practice/approach categories listed under part one of the survey (communication practices, skill development practices, restorative approaches, referral practices, and consequence practices). Each table displays the percentage and number of LEAs that reported employing a specific alternative school discipline practice/approach during the 2023-2024 school year in response to the various infraction types listed in the survey. LEAs were asked to provide any innovative practices that they were utilizing for each category in response to the various infractions. This information is provided in the narrative prior to each data set. Not all LEAs in Maryland employ each specific alternative school discipline practice/approach listed in the survey to address certain misconduct infraction types, and therefore, some LEAs did not respond to every question. In each instance where fewer than 24 LEAs responded to a survey question, a note to this effect has been included with the relevant data table.

Attendance Infractions

Survey responses indicate that the following alternative school discipline practices/approaches were used by a substantial proportion of LEAs (i.e., by at least 70% of respondents) for attendance infractions:

- Communication practices: parent outreach, parent- and/or student – teacher conference, parent- and/or student-administrator conference, check-in/check-out, student progress sheet, administrator-teacher meeting related to student, and home visit;

- Skill development practices: PBIS framework, trauma-informed approaches, social emotional learning program, academic skill development/academic remediation, and targeted skill session or group with a student services professional;

- Restorative approaches: no restorative approaches met this 70% affirmative response threshold;

- Referral practices: mentoring; Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team; school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist, school-based mental health worker; and truancy diversion panel.

- Consequence practices: loss of school day privilege and loss of after school privilege

The least used alternative school discipline practices/approaches (i.e., used by no more than 20% of respondents) for attendance infractions were conflict resolution conferences and community conferences (communication practices); peer mediation (a skill development practice); informal circles, peer mediation, other mediation, restorative conference, formal restorative circles, and restitution (restorative approaches); referrals to substance abuse counseling, rehabilitative services, threat assessments, and risk assessments (referral practices); and written apology, community services, temporary removal from class, in-school suspension, conduct officer hearing, teen court, and potential expulsion (consequence practices).

LEAs provided write-in responses for alternative school discipline practices/approaches utilized for attendance infractions included

- Comprehensive attendance contracts;

- Abbreviated schedules;

- Hybrid learning options;

- Referral to Community Mediation Agency;

- Referrals to Local Care Team;

- Incentives for attendance;

- Students lose credit for courses beyond 3 unexcused days absent per quarter, but they have the opportunity to earn the credit back;

- Reminder letters;

- Anti-truancy parent nights; and

- Project Attend, where students and their parents are required to attend an evening hearing at a local courthouse to account for chronic absenteeism.

Table 6.1. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Communication Practices to Address Attendance Infractions

Communication Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Parent outreach (phone, email, text)	87.50%	21
Parent- and/or student-teacher conference	75.00%	18
Parent- and/or student-administrator conference	75.00%	18
Parent- and/or student-support staff conference	66.67%	16
Conflict resolution conference	16.67%	4
Community conference	12.50%	3
Mediation conference	25.00%	6
Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult	75.00%	18
Daily or weekly student progress sheet (digital or paper)	79.17%	19
Behavior contract	50.00%	12
Administrator-teacher meeting related to interaction(s) with a student	75.00%	18
Home visit	87.50%	21

Table 6.2. Number/Percentage of Leas Employing Skill Development Practices to Address Attendance Infractions

Skill Development Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) framework	91.67%	22
Trauma-informed approaches	75.00%	18
Review and practice of a classroom procedure	62.50%	15
Reminder/redirection to appropriate behavior	62.50%	15

Skill Development Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Peer mediation	8.33%	2
Role Play	25.00%	6
Social emotional learning program	75.00%	18
Academic skill development/academic remediation	70.83%	17
Targeted skill session or group with a student services professional	87.50%	21

Table 6.3. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Restorative Approaches to Address Attendance Infractions

Restorative Approaches	Response Percent	Response Count
Informal circle conversation with student and victim	12.50%	3
Peer mediation	12.50%	3
Other mediation	33.33%	8
Restorative conference (repairing the harm)	8.33%	2
Formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders	8.33%	2
Formal restorative circle with parents, school-based officials, and community members	8.33%	2
Restitution	4.17%	1

Table 6.4. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Referral Practices to Address Attendance Infractions

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Mentoring	91.67%	22

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team	100.00%	24
Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan	20.83%	5
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	37.50%	9
School nurse or school health professional	45.83%	11
School counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist	83.33%	20
School-based mental health worker	70.83%	17
Community-based mental health agency	54.17%	13
Substance abuse counseling service	12.50%	3
Rehabilitative services	12.50%	3
Other community-based organization	66.67%	16
Truancy diversion panel	87.50%	21
System level alternative placement	20.83%	5
Threat assessment	0.00%	0
Risk Assessment	12.50%	3

Table 6.5. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Consequence Practices to Address Attendance Infractions

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Written apology	4.17%	1
Verbal correction	66.67%	16

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
After school detention	45.83%	11
Lunch detention	50.00%	12
Community service	16.67%	4
Loss of school day privilege	70.83%	17
Loss of after school privilege	70.83%	17
Removal from extracurricular activity	66.67%	16
Temporary removal from class	8.33%	2
In-school intervention	50.00%	12
In-school suspension	12.50%	3
Saturday school	41.67%	10
System level conduct officer hearing	12.50%	3
Teen court	8.33%	2
Truancy court	62.50%	15
These infractions may lead to an expulsion	0.00%	0

Conduct Infractions

Survey responses indicate that the following alternative school discipline practices/approaches were used by a substantial proportion of LEAs (i.e., by at least 70% of respondents) for conduct infractions:

- Communication practices: parent outreach, parent- and/or student-teacher conference, parent- and/or student-administrator conference, parent- and/or student-support staff conference, conflict resolution conference, mediation conference, check-in/check-out, student progress sheet, behavior contract, and administrator-teacher meeting related to student;
- Skill development practices: PBIS framework, trauma-informed approaches, review and practice of a classroom procedure, reminder/redirection to appropriate behavior, peer mediation, role play, social emotional learning program, academic skill development/academic remediation, targeted skill session or group with a student services professional;

- Restorative approaches: informal circle conversation with student and victim, peer mediation, other mediation, restorative conference (repairing the harm), formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders, and restitution;
- Referral practices: mentoring; Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team; Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan; IEP Team; school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist; school-based mental health worker; community-based mental health agency; other community-based organization, and system level alternative placement; and
- Consequence practices: written apology, verbal correction, after school detention, lunch detention, community services, loss of school day privilege, loss of after school privilege, removal from extracurricular activity, temporary removal from class, in-school intervention, in-school suspension, and conduct officer hearing.

The least used alternative school discipline practices/approaches (i.e., used by less than 20% of respondents) for conduct infractions were referral to substance abuse counseling and truancy diversion panel (referral practices) and truancy court, conflict resolution conference mediation conference, student progress sheet, and behavior contracts (consequence practices).

LEAs provided write-in responses when for alternative school discipline practices/approaches utilized for conduct infractions include:

- Learning activities and projects;
- Calming rooms;
- Beautification projects;
- Schedule changes; and
- Confiscation of device.

Table 7.1. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Communication Practices to Address Conduct Infractions

Communication Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Parent outreach (phone, email, text)	83.33%	20
Parent- and/or student-teacher conference	87.50%	21
Parent- and/or student-administrator conference	79.17%	19
Parent- and/or student-support staff conference	79.17%	19
Conflict resolution conference	79.17%	19
Community conference	58.33%	14
Mediation conference	79.17%	19

Communication Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult	75.00%	18
Daily or weekly student progress sheet (digital or paper)	75.00%	18
Behavior contract	87.50%	21
Administrator-teacher meeting related to interaction(s) with a student	83.33%	20
Home visit	33.33%	8

Table 7.2. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Skill Development Practices to Address Conduct Infractions

Skill Development Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) framework	91.67%	22
Trauma-informed approaches	87.50%	21
Review and practice of a classroom procedure	100.00%	24
Reminder/redirection to appropriate behavior	100.00%	24
Peer mediation	70.83%	17
Role Play	87.50%	21
Social emotional learning program	95.83%	23
Academic skill development/academic remediation	75.00%	18
Targeted skill session or group with a student services professional	91.67%	22

Table 7.3. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Restorative Approaches to Address Conduct Infractions

Restorative Approaches	Response Percent	Response Count
Informal circle conversation with student and victim	91.67%	22
Peer mediation	70.83%	17
Other mediation	79.17%	19
Restorative conference (repairing the harm)	95.83%	23
Formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders	70.83%	17
Formal restorative circle with parents, school-based officials, and community members	62.50%	15
Restitution	79.17%	19

Table 7.4. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Referral Practices to Address Conduct Infractions

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Mentoring	91.67%	22
Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team	91.67%	22
Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan	91.67%	22
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	79.17%	19
School nurse or school health professional	33.33%	8
School counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist	95.83%	23
School-based mental health worker	95.83%	23
Community-based mental health agency	79.17%	19

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Substance abuse counseling service	16.67%	4
Rehabilitative services	25.00%	6
Other community-based organization	75.00%	18
Truancy diversion panel	8.33%	2
System level alternative placement	83.33%	20
Threat assessment	62.50%	15
Risk assessment	50.00%	12

Table 7.5. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Consequence Practices to Address Conduct Infractions

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Written apology	87.50%	21
Verbal correction	100.00%	24
After school detention	91.67%	22
Lunch detention	100.00%	24
Community service	66.67%	16
Loss of school day privilege	100.00%	24
Loss of after school privilege	100.00%	24
Removal from extracurricular activity	100.00%	24
Temporary removal from class	100.00%	24
In-school intervention	100.00%	24
In-school suspension	79.17%	19

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Saturday school	62.50%	15
System level conduct officer hearing	70.83%	17
Teen court	25.00%	6
Truancy court	0.00%	0
These infractions may lead to an expulsion	25.00%	6

Drug and Alcohol Infractions

Survey responses indicate that the following alternative school discipline practices/approaches were used by a substantial proportion of LEAs (i.e., by at least 70% of respondents) for drug and alcohol infractions:

- Communication practices: parent outreach, parent- and/or student-administrator conference, and parent- and/or student-support staff conference;
- Skill development practices: trauma-informed approaches, social emotional learning program, and targeted skill session or group with a student services professional;
- Restorative approaches: no restorative approaches met this 70% affirmative response threshold;
- Referral practices: mentoring; school nurse or school health professional; school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist; school-based mental health worker; community-based mental health agency, substance abuse counseling service; rehabilitative services; other community-based organization; and system level alternative placement; and
- Consequence practices: loss of school day privilege, loss of after school privilege, removal from extracurricular activity, in-school intervention, and conduct officer hearing.

The least used alternative school discipline practices/approaches (i.e., used by less than 20% of respondents) for drug and alcohol infractions were conflict resolution conference, mediation conference, student progress sheet, and behavior contract (communication practices), review and practice of a classroom procedure, peer mediation, and role play (skill development practices), information circles, peer mediation, other mediation, formal restorative circles, and restitution (restorative approaches), referral to the IEP Team and truancy diversion panel (referral practices), and written apology, teen court, and truancy court (consequence practices).

LEAs provided write-in responses for alternative school discipline practices/approaches utilized for drug and alcohol infractions include:

- County screening program and services;
- Mandating that the student attend court ordered drug and alcohol treatment sessions; and
- Referral to local law enforcement.

Table 8.1. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Communication Practices to Address Drug and Alcohol Infractions

Communication Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Parent outreach (phone, email, text)	87.50%	21
Parent- and/or student-teacher conference	54.17%	13
Parent- and/or student-administrator conference	83.33%	20
Parent- and/or student-support staff conference	70.83%	17
Conflict resolution conference	4.17%	1
Community conference	25.00%	6
Mediation conference	0.00%	0
Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult	37.50%	9
Daily or weekly student progress sheet (digital or paper)	8.33%	2
Behavior contract	16.67%	4
Administrator-teacher meeting related to interaction(s) with a student	54.17%	13
Home visit	33.33%	8

Table 8.2. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Skill Development Practices to Address Drug and Alcohol Infractions

Skill Development Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) framework	50.00%	12
Trauma-informed approaches	87.50%	21
Review and practice of a classroom procedure	12.50%	3
Reminder/redirection to appropriate behavior	37.50%	9

Skill Development Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Peer mediation	0.00%	0
Role Play	12.50%	3
Social emotional learning program	70.83%	17
Academic skill development/academic remediation	25.00%	6
Targeted skill session or group with a student services professional	70.83%	17

Table 8.3. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Restorative Approaches to Address Drug and Alcohol Infractions

Restorative Approaches	Response Percent	Response Count
Informal circle conversation with student and victim	4.17%	1
Peer mediation	0.00%	0
Other mediation	16.67%	4
Restorative conference (repairing the harm)	29.17%	7
Formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders	20.83%	5
Formal restorative circle with parents, school-based officials, and community members	12.50%	3
Restitution	8.33%	2

Table 8.4. Number/Percentage of Leas Employing Referral Practices to Address Drug and Alcohol Infractions

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Mentoring	70.83%	17
Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team	58.33%	14

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan	25.00%	6
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	16.67%	4
School nurse or school health professional	91.67%	22
School counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist	100.00%	24
School-based mental health worker	95.83%	23
Community-based mental health agency	87.50%	21
Substance abuse counseling service	100.00%	24
Rehabilitative services	75.00%	18
Other community-based organization	95.83%	23
Truancy diversion panel	8.33%	2
System level alternative placement	70.83%	17
Threat assessment	29.17%	7
Risk Assessment	62.50%	15

Table 8.5. Number/Percentage of Leas Employing Consequence Practices to Address Drug and Alcohol Infractions

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Written apology	8.33%	2
Verbal correction	62.50%	15
After school detention	29.17%	7
Lunch detention	29.17%	7

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Community service	25.00%	6
Loss of school day privilege	75.00%	18
Loss of after school privilege	79.17%	19
Removal from extracurricular activity	87.50%	21
Temporary removal from class	54.17%	13
In-school intervention	75.00%	18
In-school suspension	58.33%	14
Saturday school	33.33%	8
System level conduct officer hearing	70.83%	17
Teen court	12.50%	3
Truancy court	0.00%	0
These infractions may lead to an expulsion	50.00%	12

Sexual Misconduct Infractions

Survey responses indicate that the following alternative school discipline practices/approaches were used by a substantial proportion of LEAs (i.e., by at least 70% of respondents) for sexual misconduct infractions:

- Communication practices: parent outreach and parent- and/or student-administrator conference;
- Skill development practices: trauma-informed approaches;
- Restorative approaches: no restorative approaches met this 70% affirmative response threshold;
- Referral practices: school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist; school-based mental health worker; community-based mental health agency; other community-based organization, and system level alternative placement; and
- Consequence practices: removal from extracurricular activity.

The least used alternative school discipline practices/approaches (i.e., used by less than 20% of respondents) for sexual misconduct infractions were community conference, mediation conference, check-in/check-out, student progress sheet, and home visit (communication practices), review and

practice of a classroom procedure, peer mediation, role play, and academic skill development/academic remediation (skill development practices), informal circles, peer mediation, formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders, formal restorative circle with parents, school-based officials, and community members restitution (restorative approaches), referral to substance abuse counseling, truancy diversion panel (referral practices) and after school detention, lunch detention, community service, teen court, and truancy court (consequence practices).

LEAs provided write-in responses for alternative school discipline practices/approaches utilized for sexual misconduct infractions including:

- Consult with law enforcement;
- Referral for mental health evaluation with the Department of Social Services;
- Supportive measures such as escorts, class changes, counseling, etc.; and
- Involvement with the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS).

Table 9.1. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Communication Practices to Address Sexual Misconduct Infractions

Communication Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Parent outreach (phone, email, text)	83.33%	20
Parent- and/or student-teacher conference	50.00%	12
Parent- and/or student-administrator conference	83.33%	20
Parent- and/or student-support staff conference	58.33%	14
Conflict resolution conference	20.83%	5
Community conference	8.33%	2
Mediation conference	16.67%	4
Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult	16.67%	4
Daily or weekly student progress sheet (digital or paper)	4.17%	1
Behavior contract	16.67%	4
Administrator-teacher meeting related to interaction(s) with a student	50.00%	12
Home visit	16.67%	4

Table 9.2. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Skill Development Practices to Address Sexual Misconduct Infractions

Skill Development Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) framework	54.17%	13
Trauma-informed approaches	100.00%	24
Review and practice of a classroom procedure	12.50%	3
Reminder/redirection to appropriate behavior	33.33%	8
Peer mediation	0.00%	0
Role Play	16.67%	4
Social emotional learning program	66.67%	16
Academic skill development/academic remediation	12.50%	3
Targeted skill session or group with a student services professional	58.33%	14

Table 9.3. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Restorative Approaches to Address Sexual Misconduct Infractions

Restorative Approaches	Response Percent	Response Count
Informal circle conversation with student and victim	12.50%	3
Peer mediation	0.00%	0
Other mediation	33.33%	8
Restorative conference (repairing the harm)	33.33%	8
Formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders	16.67%	4
Formal restorative circle with parents, school-based officials, and community members	16.67%	4

Restorative Approaches	Response Percent	Response Count
Restitution	4.17%	1

Table 9.4. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Referral Practices to Address Sexual Misconduct Infractions

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Mentoring	50.00%	12
Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team	50.00%	12
Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan	62.50%	15
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	37.50%	9
School nurse or school health professional	37.50%	9
School counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist	91.67%	22
School-based mental health worker	91.67%	22
Community-based mental health agency	87.50%	21
Substance abuse counseling service	4.17%	1
Rehabilitative services	50.00%	12
Other community-based organization	87.50%	21
Truancy diversion panel	0.00%	0
System level alternative placement	87.50%	21
Threat assessment	62.50%	15
Risk Assessment	66.67%	16

Table 9.5. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Consequence Practices to Address Sexual Misconduct Infractions

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Written apology	20.83%	5
Verbal correction	62.50%	15
After school detention	12.50%	3
Lunch detention	16.67%	4
Community service	16.67%	4
Loss of school day privilege	66.67%	16
Loss of after school privilege	66.67%	16
Removal from extracurricular activity	87.50%	21
Temporary removal from class	54.17%	13
In-school intervention	62.50%	15
In-school suspension	45.83%	11
Saturday school	29.17%	7
System level conduct officer hearing	75.00%	18
Teen court	12.50%	3
Truancy court	4.17%	1
These infractions may lead to an expulsion	62.50%	15

Violent Infractions

Survey responses indicate that the following alternative school discipline practices/approaches were used by a substantial proportion of LEAs (i.e., by at least 70% of respondents) for violent infractions:

- Communication practices: parent outreach, parent- and/or student-administrator conference;
- Skill development practices: trauma-informed approaches, social emotional learning program, and targeted skill session or group with a student services professional;
- Restorative approaches: other mediation and restorative conference (repairing the harm);

- Referral practices: Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan; school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist; school-based mental health worker; community-based mental health agency; other community-based organization; system level alternative placement; threat assessment; and risk assessment; and
- Consequence practices: loss of school day privilege, loss of after school privilege, removal from extracurricular activity, system level conduct officer hearing, and possible expulsion.

The least used alternative school discipline practices/approaches (i.e., used by less than 20% of respondents) for violent infractions were referral to substance abuse counseling and truancy diversion court (referral practices), and teen court and truancy court (consequence practices).

LEAs provided write-in responses for alternative school discipline practices/approaches utilized for violent infractions include:

- Safety Transfer Ambassadors;
- Learning projects;
- Referral to DJS; and
- Schedule or class changes.

Table 10.1. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Communication Practices to Address Violent Infractions

Communication Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Parent outreach (phone, email, text)	87.50%	21
Parent- and/or student-teacher conference	54.17%	13
Parent- and/or student-administrator conference	87.50%	21
Parent- and/or student-support staff conference	66.67%	16
Conflict resolution conference	58.33%	14
Community conference	54.17%	13
Mediation conference	54.17%	13
Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult	45.83%	11
Daily or weekly student progress sheet (digital or paper)	41.67%	10
Behavior contract	54.17%	13

Administrator-teacher meeting related to interaction(s) with a student	54.17%	13
Home visit	37.50%	9

Table 10.2. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Skill Development Practices to Address Violent Infractions

Skill Development Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) framework	62.50%	15
Trauma-informed approaches	91.67%	22
Review and practice of a classroom procedure	37.50%	9
Reminder/redirection to appropriate behavior	66.67%	16
Peer mediation	37.50%	9
Role Play	29.17%	7
Social emotional learning program	79.17%	19
Academic skill development/academic remediation	25.00%	6
Targeted skill session or group with a student services professional	75.00%	18

Table 10.3. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Restorative Approaches to Address Violent Infractions

Restorative Approaches	Response Percent	Response Count
Informal circle conversation with student and victim	58.33%	14
Peer mediation	41.67%	10
Other mediation	70.83%	17
Restorative conference (repairing the harm)	75.00%	18

Formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders	62.50%	15
Formal restorative circle with parents, school-based officials, and community members	58.33%	14
Restitution	41.67%	10

Table 10.4. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Referral Practices to Address Violent Infractions

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Mentoring	58.33%	14
Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team	62.50%	15
Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan	87.50%	21
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	66.67%	16
School nurse or school health professional	20.83%	5
School counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist	95.83%	23
School-based mental health worker	95.83%	23
Community-based mental health agency	87.50%	21
Substance abuse counseling service	8.33%	2
Rehabilitative services	45.83%	11
Other community-based organization	91.67%	22
Truancy diversion panel	4.17%	1
System level alternative placement	91.67%	22
Threat assessment	100.00%	24

Risk Assessment	83.33%	20

Table 10.5. Number/Percentage of LEAs Employing Consequence Practices to Address Violent Infractions

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Written apology	50.00%	12
Verbal correction	66.67%	16
After school detention	25.00%	6
Lunch detention	25.00%	6
Community service	29.17%	7
Loss of school day privilege	79.17%	19
Loss of after school privilege	75.00%	18
Removal from extracurricular activity	87.50%	21
Temporary removal from class	58.33%	14
In-school intervention	62.50%	15
In-school suspension	50.00%	12
Saturday school	33.33%	8
System level conduct officer hearing	83.33%	20
Teen court	16.67%	4
Truancy court	4.17%	1
These infractions may lead to an expulsion	83.33%	20

Summary

This report presents statewide data on alternative school discipline practices/approaches used in Maryland public schools. After reviewing the data, the following comments are provided for consideration.

Comparison of the current data to the 2022-2023 school year data:

- In terms of communication practices, parent outreach remained the most commonly used practice among LEAs, with all 24 LEAs again reporting the use of this practice at a high frequency.
- There was a decrease reported in the use of parent- and/or student-teacher conference and parent- and/or student-administrator conference from the previous year.
- Use of PBIS as a framework, review and practice of a classroom procedure, and reminder/redirection to an appropriate replacement behavior remained as high frequency skill development practices.
- Informal circles and restorative conferences remained the most widely used forms of restorative approaches.
- Referral to the Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team continued to be the most highly used referral practice.
- While verbal correction remained the highest used consequences practice, removal from extracurricular activity and Saturday school were used in a lower frequency during the 2023-2024 school year than during the 2022-2023 school year.
- Referrals to the Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team was reported by every LEA for attendance infractions, which was higher than in the previous year, but referral to the truancy diversion panel was reported by 5 more LEAs than during the prior school year.
- For conduct infractions, more LEAs reported using community conferences and mediation conferences as communication practices; role play and peer mediation as skill development practices; and community service, removal of extracurricular activity, and teen court as consequence practices.
- More LEAs reported referring to substance abuse counseling for drug and alcohol infractions than during the prior school year.
- For sexual misconduct infractions, every LEA reported using trauma-informed approaches, compared to 21 LEAs during the 2022-2023 school year.
- LEAs were more likely to report the use of peer mediation for violent infraction during the 2023-2024 school year than during the previous school year.

Summary and highlights from alternative discipline practices/approaches used for the five categories of infractions:

- Attendance infractions
  - The most common alternative discipline practices/approaches used for attendance infractions were referrals to the Student Support or other Tier 1 team (Table 6.1) with every LEA reporting that practice.
- Conduct infractions
  - Every LEA reported using trauma-informed approaches, review and practice of a classroom procedure, verbal correction, loss of school day privilege, loss of after school

privilege, removal from extracurricular activity temporary removal from class, and in-school interventions for conduct infractions (tables 7.2 and 7.5

- Drug and alcohol infractions
  - o All 24 LEAs indicated the referral to school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist; and referral to substance abuse counseling for drug and alcohol infraction (Table 8.4).
- Sexual misconduct infractions
  - o LEAs unanimously reported the use of trauma-informed approaches for sexual misconduct infractions (Table 9.2).
- Violent infractions
  - o Threat assessments were indicated by every LEA to be used for conduct infractions (Table 10.4).

Considerations:

- In order to prevent behavior and conduct infractions, LEAs should provide professional learning experiences for teachers to implement the following seven practices:
  - o Design effective classroom environments;
  - o Develop and teach predictable classroom routines;
  - o Explicitly post and teach stated classroom expectations positively;
  - o Deliver engaging instruction;
  - o Provide prompts and active supervision;
  - o Acknowledge students with specific praise; and
  - o Respond to problem behavior with redirections and corrections.
- Administrators should observe teachers and classrooms to ensure implementation of these seven classroom practices.
- LEAs should focus on implementing Tier 1 core practices to enhance the development of restorative/relationship focused school communities. building a more positive school culture and improve relationships between and among students and staff.
- LEAs and schools should have established procedures for the creation and implementation of a student support team. These teams should have regular meeting times throughout the school year to examine student behavior data and engage in rigorous problem-solving to decrease inappropriate student behavior.
- Professional learning experiences should be provided to teachers and staff on the differences between major and minor infractions, teacher management of minor infractions, and office referrals or administration for major infractions.
- LEAs should include policies for addressing minor infractions in order to ensure that these minor infractions within the classroom do not escalate to more significant behavioral infractions that require severe consequences such as suspensions and expulsions.
- LEAs will provide professional learning experiences on the school-to-home connection and family engagement. Administrators should engage the parent in the solution to the behavior and infraction upon receipt of an office referral.
- LEAs should establish review/revise policies to ensure student success, including grading and attendance policies. Ensuring student success through these policies will keep students engaged and motivated in class and promote school culture.
- LEAs will provide alternatives to suspension for infractions such as disrespect or minor disruption, that are not considered safety violations or significant disruptions to the instructional setting. Alternatives to suspensions to be considered include loss of privileges,

after school detention, alternative lunch settings, Saturday school, community service, restitution, and referrals to the student support team.

- LEAS should develop protocols for monitoring student behavior in non-instructional areas such as the hallways, playground and cafeteria with increased visibility in these areas.
- LEA should develop protocols for school-based student support teams to develop individualized support plans for students in need of more intensive interventions such as wrap-around supports, flexible scheduling and a referral process for staff.
- LEAs should establish Tier 3 interventions for ongoing behavior infractions. Suggestions for Tier 3 interventions include scheduling flexibility and thoughtful teacher and student matching.