



Alternative School Discipline Practices:

Data Collection, Findings, and Considerations
2024-2025 School Year

Education Article § 7-306(e)

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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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. As required by House Bill 197/Senate Bill 68 enacted in 2025, MSDE has developed a Restorative Practice Workgroup, charged with drafting a comprehensive plan to establish a framework for Restorative Practice Schools in Maryland. The plan must be completed by July 1, 2026.

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 2024-2025 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 2024-2025 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 of the 24 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)	25.00% (6)	16.67% (4)	45.83% (11)	12.50% (3)
Parent- and/or student-administrator conference	0% (0)	8.33% (2)	29.17% (7)	45.83% (11)	16.67% (4)
Parent- and/or student-support staff conference	0% (0)	29.17% (7)	41.67% (10)	20.83% (5)	8.33% (2)
Conflict resolution conference	0% (0)	33.33% (8)	45.83% (11)	12.5% (3)	8.33% (2)

Frequency of Practice	Never	Less than half of the time	About half of the time	More than half of the time	Always
Community conference	16.00% (4)	68.00% (17)	8.00% (2)	4.00% (1)	4.00% (1)
Mediation conference	12.00% (3)	44.00% (11)	36.00% (9)	4.00% (1)	4.00% (1)
Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult	0% (0)	25.00% (6)	37.50% (9)	33.33% (8)	4.17% (1)
Daily or weekly student progress sheet (digital or paper)	0% (0)	45.83% (11)	29.17% (7)	20.83% (5)	4.17% (1)
Behavior contract	0% (0)	60.87% (14)	21.74% (5)	17.39% (4)	0% (0)
Administrator-teacher meeting related to interaction(s) with a student	0% (0)	25.00% (6)	29.17% (7)	37.50% (9)	8.33% (2)
Home visit	4.00% (1)	76.00% (19)	8.00% (2)	8.00% (2)	4.00% (1)

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, trauma-informed approaches, 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)	0% (0)	20.83% (5)	33.33% (8)	45.83% (11)
Trauma-informed approaches	0% (0)	4.17% (1)	16.67% (4)	50.00% (12)	29.17% (7)
Review and practice of a classroom procedure	0% (0)	12.50% (3)	8.33% (2)	45.83% (11)	33.33% (8)
Reminder/redirection to an appropriate replacement behavior	0% (0)	4.17% (1)	0% (0)	66.67% (16)	29.17% (7)
Peer mediation	20.83% (5)	45.83% (11)	25.00% (6)	8.33% (2)	0% (0)
Role play	12.00% (3)	76.00% (19)	8.00% (2)	4.00% (1)	0% (0)
Participation in a social emotional learning program	0% (0)	20.83% (5)	29.17% (7)	29.17% (7)	20.83% (5)
Participation in an academic skill development program/academic remediation*	0% (0)	45.83% (11)	20.83% (5)	29.17% (7)	4.17% (1)
Participation in a targeted skill session or group with a student service professional	0% (0)	45.83% (11)	25.00% (6)	29.17% (7)	0% (0)

Restorative Approaches

For the use of restorative approaches, the most frequently used restorative approaches were informal circle conversation with student and victim, with six 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 23 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	4.17% (1)	54.17% (13)	16.67% (4)	20.83% (5)	4.17% (1)
Peer mediation	12.00% (3)	68.00% (17)	16.00% (4)	4.00% (1)	0% (0)
Other forms of mediation	4.17% (1)	54.17% (13)	29.17% (7)	8.33% (2)	4.17% (1)
Restorative conferences (the act of repairing the harm done)	4.17% (1)	33.33% (8)	33.33% (8)	20.83% (5)	8.33% (2)
Formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders and a written agreement	4.17% (1)	62.50% (15)	20.83% (5)	8.33% (2)	4.17% (1)
Formal restorative circle with parents, school-based stakeholders, community member(s), and a written agreement	20.00% (5)	60.00% (15)	8.00% (2)	8.00% (2)	4.00% (1)
Restitution	4.17% (1)	91.67% (22)	0% (0)	4.17% (1)	0.00% (0)

Referral Practices

Reporting about the use of referral practices found 15 out of the 24 LEAs make a referral to the Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team¹ 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)	62.50% (15)	33.33% (8)	0% (0)	4.17% (1)
Referral to the Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team	0.00% (0)	8.33% (2)	29.17% (7)	50.00% (12)	12.50% (3)
Referral to complete a Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan	0.00% (0)	64.00% (16)	24.00% (6)	12.00% (3)	0.00% (0)
Referral to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	0.00% (0)	70.83% (17)	20.83% (5)	4.17% (1)	4.17% (1)
Referral to the school nurse or school health professional	4.17% (1)	70.83% (17)	16.67% (4)	8.33% (2)	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)	25.00% (6)	50.00% (12)	4.17% (1)
Referral to a school-based mental health worker	4.17% (1)	50.00% (12)	20.83% (5)	25.00% (6)	0.00% (0)

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 community-based mental health agency	0.00% (0)	66.67% (16)	12.50% (3)	20.83% (5)	0.00% (0)
Referral to a substance abuse counseling service	0.00% (0)	87.50% (21)	8.33% (2)	0.00% (0)	4.17% (1)
Referral for rehabilitative services	8.33% (2)	83.33% (20)	8.33% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)
Referral to other community-based agency	0.00% (0)	70.83% (17)	16.67% (4)	12.50% (3)	0.00% (0)
Referral to truancy diversion panel	16.67% (4)	79.17% (19)	4.17% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)
Referral to a system level alternative placement	4.17% (1)	83.33% (20)	8.33% (2)	4.17% (1)	0.00% (0)
Referral for threat assessment	0.00% (0)	75.00% (18)	25.00% (6)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)
Referral for risk assessment	0.00% (0)	79.17% (19)	20.83% (5)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)

Consequence Practices

In terms of the use of consequence practices, 22 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 practices were Saturday school and 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)	4.17% (1)	4.17% (1)	33.33% (8)	58.33% (14)
After school detention	8.33% (2)	62.50% (15)	16.67% (4)	8.33% (2)	4.17% (1)
Lunch detention*	0.00% (0)	52.17% (12)	34.78% (8)	8.70% (2)	4.35% (1)
Community service	25.00% (6)	70.83% (17)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	4.17% (1)
Loss of school day privilege	0.00% (0)	62.50% (15)	20.83% (5)	12.50% (3)	4.17% (1)
Loss of after school privilege	0.00% (0)	62.50% (15)	29.17% (7)	4.17% (1)	4.17% (1)
Removal from extracurricular activity	4.17% (1)	75.00% (18)	12.50% (3)	4.17% (1)	4.17% (1)
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)	41.67% (10)	12.50% (3)	37.50% (9)	8.33% (2)
In-school suspension	20.83% (5)	58.33% (14)	20.83% (5)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)
Saturday school	45.83% (11)	50.00% (12)	4.17% (1)	0.00% (0)	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
System level conduct officer hearing	8.33% (2)	79.17% (19)	4.17% (1)	8.33% (2)	0.00% (0)
Teen court	70.83% (17)	25.00% (6)	4.17% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)
Truancy court	45.83% (11)	45.83% (11)	0.00% (0)	8.33% (2)	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 2024-2025 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 2024-2025 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 2024-2025 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;
- Pupil Personnel Workers;
- 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
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Parent outreach (phone, email, text)	100.00%	24
Parent- and/or student-teacher conference	87.5%	21
Parent- and/or student-administrator conference	79.16%	19
Parent- and/or student-support staff conference	83.33%	20
Conflict resolution conference	12.50%	3
Community conference	25.00%	6
Mediation conference	20.83%	5
Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult	91.66%	22
Daily or weekly student progress sheet (digital or paper)	95.83%	23
Behavior contract	66.66%	16
Administrator-teacher meeting related to interaction(s) with a student	70.83%	17
Home visit	100.00%	24

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	95.83%	23
Trauma-informed approaches	87.50%	21
Review and practice of a classroom procedure	58.33%	14
Reminder/redirection to appropriate behavior	83.33%	20
Peer mediation	37.50%	9
Role Play	45.83%	11

Skill Development Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Social emotional learning program	79.16%	19
Academic skill development/academic remediation	91.66%	22
Targeted skill session or group with a student services professional	79.16%	19

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	29.16%	7
Peer mediation	29.16%	7
Other mediation	37.50%	9
Restorative conference (repairing the harm)	25.00%	6
Formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders	25.00%	6
Formal restorative circle with parents, school-based officials, and community members	16.66%	4
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
Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team	100.00%	24

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan	33.33%	8
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	29.16%	7
School nurse or school health professional	58.33%	14
School counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist	95.83%	23
School-based mental health worker	83.33%	20
Community-based mental health agency	66.66%	16
Substance abuse counseling service	12.50%	3
Rehabilitative services	16.66%	4
Other community-based organization	75.00%	18
Truancy diversion panel	83.33%	20
System level alternative placement	16.66%	4
Threat assessment	0.00%	0
Risk Assessment	8.33%	2

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

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Written apology	0.00%	0

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Verbal correction	70.83%	17
After school detention	54.16%	13
Lunch detention	58.33%	14
Community service	8.33%	2
Loss of school day privilege	54.16%	13
Loss of after school privilege	70.83%	17
Removal from extracurricular activity	70.83%	17
Temporary removal from class	16.66%	4
In-school intervention	45.83%	11
In-school suspension	8.33%	2
Saturday school	37.50%	9
System level conduct officer hearing	4.16%	1
Teen court	4.16%	1
Truancy court	62.50%	15

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
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)	100.00%	24
Parent- and/or student-teacher conference	100.00%	24
Parent- and/or student-administrator conference	100.00%	24
Parent- and/or student-support staff conference	83.33%	20
Conflict resolution conference	95.83%	23
Community conference	66.66%	16
Mediation conference	79.17%	19
Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult	95.83%	23
Daily or weekly student progress sheet (digital or paper)	100.00%	24
Behavior contract	100.00%	24
Administrator-teacher meeting related to interaction(s) with a student	95.83%	23
Home visit	66.66%	16

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	100.00%	24
Trauma-informed approaches	95.83%	23
Review and practice of a classroom procedure	100.00%	24
Reminder/redirection to appropriate behavior	100.00%	24
Peer mediation	66.66%	16

Skill Development Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Role Play	70.83%	17
Social emotional learning program	100.00%	24
Academic skill development/academic remediation	70.83%	17
Targeted skill session or group with a student services professional	95.83%	23

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	95.83%	23
Peer mediation	70.83%	17
Other mediation	62.5%	15
Restorative conference (repairing the harm)	91.66%	22
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	100.00%	24
Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team	100.00%	24

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan	95.83%	23
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	87.50%	21
School nurse or school health professional	41.66%	10
School counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist	95.83%	23
School-based mental health worker	91.66%	22
Community-based mental health agency	91.66%	22
Substance abuse counseling service	20.83%	5
Rehabilitative services	33.33%	8
Other community-based organization	70.83%	17
Truancy diversion panel	4.16%	1
System level alternative placement	87.50%	21
Threat assessment	58.33%	14
Risk assessment	54.16%	13

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

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Written apology	91.66%	22
Verbal correction	95.83%	23

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
After school detention	79.16%	19
Lunch detention	100.00%	24
Community service	58.33%	14
Loss of school day privilege	95.83%	23
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	91.66%	22
In-school suspension	70.83%	17
Saturday school	45.83%	11
System level conduct officer hearing	58.33%	14
Teen court	20.83%	5
Truancy court	8.33%	2
These infractions may lead to an expulsion	41.66%	10

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)	100.00%	24
Parent- and/or student-teacher conference	54.17%	13
Parent- and/or student-administrator conference	100.00%	24
Parent- and/or student-support staff conference	75.00%	18
Conflict resolution conference	12.50%	3

Community conference	20.83%	5
Mediation conference	0.00%	0
Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult	54.16%	13
Daily or weekly student progress sheet (digital or paper)	33.33%	8
Behavior contract	41.66%	10
Administrator-teacher meeting related to interaction(s) with a student	58.33%	14
Home visit	37.50%	9

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	58.33%	14
Trauma-informed approaches	100.00%	24
Review and practice of a classroom procedure	16.66%	4
Reminder/redirection to appropriate behavior	37.50%	9
Peer mediation	4.16%	1
Role Play	16.66%	4
Social emotional learning program	79.16%	19
Academic skill development/academic remediation	29.16%	7

Skill Development Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Targeted skill session or group with a student services professional	66.66%	16

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	16.66%	4
Peer mediation	4.16%	1
Other mediation	12.5%	3
Restorative conference (repairing the harm)	25.00%	6
Formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders	33.33%	8
Formal restorative circle with parents, school-based officials, and community members	33.33%	8
Restitution	16.66%	4

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

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Mentoring	83.33%	20
Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team	66.66%	16
Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan	37.50%	9
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	20.83%	5
School nurse or school health professional	87.50%	21
School counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist	95.83%	23

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
School-based mental health worker	91.66%	22
Community-based mental health agency	91.66%	22
Substance abuse counseling service	95.83%	23
Rehabilitative services	58.33%	14
Other community-based organization	87.50%	21
Truancy diversion panel	4.16%	1
System level alternative placement	79.16%	19
Threat assessment	20.83%	5
Risk Assessment	54.16%	13

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

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Written apology	0.00%	0
Verbal correction	33.33%	8
After school detention	16.66%	4
Lunch detention	16.66%	4
Community service	25.00%	6
Loss of school day privilege	79.17%	19

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Loss of after school privilege	87.50%	21
Removal from extracurricular activity	91.66%	22
Temporary removal from class	62.50%	15
In-school intervention	79.17%	19
In-school suspension	58.33%	14
Saturday school	25.00%	6
System level conduct officer hearing	75.00%	18
Teen court	12.50%	3
Truancy court	8.33%	2
These infractions may lead to an expulsion	75.00%	18

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)	95.83%	23
Parent- and/or student-teacher conference	54.16%	13
Parent- and/or student-administrator conference	95.83%	23
Parent- and/or student-support staff conference	58.33%	14
Conflict resolution conference	16.66%	4
Community conference	20.83%	5
Mediation conference	12.50%	3
Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult	41.66%	10
Daily or weekly student progress sheet (digital or paper)	25.00%	6
Behavior contract	33.33%	8

Communication Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Administrator-teacher meeting related to interaction(s) with a student	54.16%	13
Home visit	33.33%	8

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	95.83%	23
Review and practice of a classroom procedure	16.66%	4
Reminder/redirection to appropriate behavior	45.83%	11
Peer mediation	8.33%	2
Role Play	12.50%	3
Social emotional learning program	66.67%	16
Academic skill development/academic remediation	16.66%	4
Targeted skill session or group with a student services professional	54.16%	13

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	8.33%	2

Restorative Approaches	Response Percent	Response Count
Peer mediation	0.00%	0
Other mediation	25.00%	6
Restorative conference (repairing the harm)	25.00%	6
Formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders	16.67%	4
Formal restorative circle with parents, school-based officials, and community members	16.67%	4
Restitution	0.00%	0

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	54.16%	13
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	33.33%	8
School nurse or school health professional	25.00%	6
School counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist	83.33%	20
School-based mental health worker	83.33%	20
Community-based mental health agency	83.33%	20
Substance abuse counseling service	20.83%	5
Rehabilitative services	25.00%	6

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Other community-based organization	83.33%	20
Truancy diversion panel	0.00%	0
System level alternative placement	87.50%	21
Threat assessment	75.00%	18
Risk Assessment	62.50%	15

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

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Written apology	4.16%	1
Verbal correction	33.33%	8
After school detention	12.50%	3
Lunch detention	12.50%	3
Community service	16.67%	4
Loss of school day privilege	87.50%	21
Loss of after school privilege	91.66%	22
Removal from extracurricular activity	100.00%	24
Temporary removal from class	58.33%	14

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
In-school intervention	58.33%	14
In-school suspension	33.33%	8
Saturday school	16.66%	4
System level conduct officer hearing	70.83%	17
Teen court	12.50%	3
Truancy court	4.17%	1
These infractions may lead to an expulsion	75.00%	18

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)	100.00%	24
Parent- and/or student-teacher conference	54.16%	13
Parent- and/or student-administrator conference	100.00%	24
Parent- and/or student-support staff conference	66.67%	16
Conflict resolution conference	50.00%	12
Community conference	45.83%	11
Mediation conference	50.00%	12
Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult	62.50%	15
Daily or weekly student progress sheet (digital or paper)	50.00%	12
Behavior contract	70.83%	17
Administrator-teacher meeting related to interaction(s) with a student	70.83%	17
Home visit	50.00%	12

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	70.83%	17
Trauma-informed approaches	100.00%	24
Review and practice of a classroom procedure	37.50%	9
Reminder/redirection to appropriate behavior	54.16%	13
Peer mediation	29.17%	7
Role Play	20.83%	5
Social emotional learning program	70.83%	17
Academic skill development/academic remediation	20.83%	5
Targeted skill session or group with a student services professional	66.66%	16

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	45.83%	11
Peer mediation	16.66%	4
Other mediation	37.50%	9
Restorative conference (repairing the harm)	62.50%	15
Formal restorative circle with school-based stakeholders	62.50%	15
Formal restorative circle with parents, school-based officials, and community members	50.00%	12
Restitution	33.33%	8

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

Referral Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Mentoring	70.83%	17
Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team	58.33%	14
Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan	83.33%	20
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	62.50%	15
School nurse or school health professional	20.83%	5
School counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, and/or behavior interventionist	91.66%	22
School-based mental health worker	83.33%	20
Community-based mental health agency	87.50%	21
Substance abuse counseling service	16.66%	4
Rehabilitative services	29.16%	7
Other community-based organization	79.16%	19
Truancy diversion panel	4.17%	1
System level alternative placement	91.67%	22
Threat assessment	100.00%	24
Risk Assessment	79.16%	19

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

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Written apology	37.50%	9

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
Verbal correction	41.66%	10
After school detention	20.83%	5
Lunch detention	16.66%	4
Community service	20.83%	5
Loss of school day privilege	91.66%	22
Loss of after school privilege	95.83%	23
Removal from extracurricular activity	100.00%	24
Temporary removal from class	75.00%	18
In-school intervention	58.33%	14
In-school suspension	29.16%	7
Saturday school	16.66%	4
System level conduct officer hearing	83.33%	20
Teen court	12.50%	3
Truancy court	4.17%	1

Consequence Practices	Response Percent	Response Count
These infractions may lead to an expulsion	95.83%	23

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 2023-2024 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.
- 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 2024-2025 school year than during the 2023-2024 school year.
- Referrals to the Student Support Team or other Tier 1 support team were reported by every LEA for attendance infractions.
- 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.
- LEAs were more likely to use Check-in/Check-out with a school-based adult as an intervention than in previous years
- More LEAs reported referring to substance abuse counseling for drug and alcohol infractions than during the prior school year.
- The use of trauma-informed informed approaches continues to increase.
- LEAs were more likely to report the use of peer mediation for violent infraction during the 2024-2025 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

- o 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
 - o 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.
- LEAs 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.