

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

2644 Riva Road • Annapolis • Maryland • 21401

BILL: SB43 HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA BY EXAMINATION - ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS - EXEMPTION

HEARING DATE: JANUARY 16, 2018

COMMITTEE: FINANCE

POSITION: SUPPORT

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The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County supports SB43 High School Diploma by Examination - Eligibility Requirements - Exemption. This bill would exempt English language learners from the requirement to withdraw from high school prior to obtaining a diploma by examination (GED).

The single most important strategic goal of the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County is to accelerate the academic learning and engagement of all students while eliminating all achievement, experience, and opportunity gaps. As such, we believe that specific emphasis should be placed on increasingly underrepresented student groups and their participation in challenging academic programs. The Board supports additional programs and resources, such as SB43, that help meet the varied needs of English language learners.

English language learners between the ages of 17 and 21, who have not achieved a sufficient number of credit hours to graduate, are more likely to drop out of school. However, providing them with an alternative program that leads to a high school diploma will help these students obtain a high school diploma and become our future leaders, entrepreneurs, and skilled employees of tomorrow. As such, Anne Arundel County Public Schools is one of several school systems currently participating in a GED Option Program for English language learners, established by the Maryland State Department of Education, which meets the requirements of the bill, and will help students successfully complete the GED test and obtain a high school diploma. SB43 would make this statewide and is another tool to ensure that all students can be successful in their completion of a high school education.

Accordingly, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on SB43.