

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

2644 Riva Road • Annapolis • Maryland • 21401

BILL: HB10 State Lottery - Unclaimed Prizes - Public Prekindergarten Programs

HEARING DATE: JANUARY 17, 2018

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

POSITION: SUPPORT

CONTACT PERSON: Jeanette Ortiz, Esq., *Legislative & Policy Counsel* (410.703.5352)

The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County supports **HB10 State Lottery - Unclaimed Prizes - Public Prekindergarten Programs**. This bill would remit money in the unclaimed State lottery prize fund to the Comptroller for distribution to each county board of education to help fund prekindergarten programs.

We support full per-pupil funding allocation for students attending public prekindergarten without any offsetting reduction in compensatory education funding. This legislation will help to expand and fully fund public prekindergarten programs in Maryland. Expanded access to public prekindergarten programs will help to close the student achievement gap.

Under current law, all children who are 4 years old on September 1 of that school year, who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals and whose parents/guardians seek to enroll the child in a public prekindergarten program, must be admitted free of charge to publicly funded prekindergarten programs established by each of the local boards of education.

Additionally, State regulations require local school systems to provide prekindergarten for a minimum of 2.5 hours per day using certified early education teachers. However, prekindergarten students are not included in the annual September 30 enrollment counts for State education aid. By excluding nearly 30,000 students as enrolled, the State funding laws that provide per pupil State and local funding for all students are not triggered which means that school systems do not receive adequate funding for students enrolled in prekindergarten. HB10 is a step in the right direction to help address the longstanding deficiency in funding provided to local school systems for prekindergarten.

Accordingly, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on HB10.