

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

2644 Riva Road • Annapolis • Maryland • 21401

BILL: SB639 EDUCATION - PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL - DISCIPLINARY HEARING PROCEDURES

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 2018

COMMITTEE: EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

POSITION: OPPOSE

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

The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County opposes **SB639 EDUCATION - PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL - DISCIPLINARY HEARING PROCEDURES**. This bill would significantly alter current Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) policy and procedures concerning employee discipline. This bill would allow an individual recommended for termination to request a hearing before the county board of education or an arbitrator. If an arbitrator is selected, the arbitrator would determine whether a county board has sufficient cause for suspension or termination of the individual.

SB639 would essentially strip the authority of county boards of education to determine the suitability of employees in the public school system for which they are accountable to govern. This bill would place the decision of whether or not to continue an individual's employment with a school system in the hands of an independent third party who may or may not have the best interests of students in mind.

Additionally, this bill is an unfunded mandate which could have a significant fiscal impact on the local school systems should employee bargaining units encourage arbitration over county board of education hearings. For example, arbitrators, per the negotiated agreement with the Anne Arundel County Public Schools teachers association, are paid by the losing party. Depending on the time and length of hearings, a county board of education could be faced with both paying all costs of the arbitration and the cost of re-employing an unsuitable employee. Additionally, the hearing costs associated with an arbitrator are typically much higher than the costs associated with a hearing examiner.

When our schools face \$2.9 billion in unmet needs annually, flat wages for school employees, high class sizes and caseloads, these types of expenses are indefensible.

Accordingly, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on SB639.