

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

2644 Riva Road • Annapolis • Maryland • 21401

BILL: SB840 YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAMS - CONCUSSION RISK AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING - REQUIREMENTS

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 SB840 YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAMS - CONCUSSION RISK AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING - REQUIREMENTS. This bill would make changes to the concussion risk and management training requirements for sports programs at public schools and recreational youth sports programs. Specifically, the bill would require educate, instead of provide awareness to, coaches, school personnel, students, and the parents or guardians of students on matter relating to concussions and head injuries. The bill would also require that an educated individual or a licensed health care provider must be at every practice and game, and that individual would responsible for final decisions regarding a student's removal from or return to play. Local school systems would be required to make the training provided to local school system employees available to coaches and other individuals from youth sports programs.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) has been a leader in concussion risk and management training as well as in providing information to our coaches, students, and parents about the risks associated with concussions. We recognize the seriousness of traumatic brain injuries and have taken many steps over the past decade to enact programs, policies, and continual monitoring of the health and safety of students. However, we have concerns regarding the proposed language in the legislation that would require the State Board of Education to "educate" instead of "provide awareness" about concussions to coaches, school personnel, students, and the parents/guardians on matters relating to concussions and head injuries. The word "educate" is ambiguous and could lead to uncertainty in the level of education delivered. Currently, each school system must provide student-athletes, parents or guardians, and school personnel with informational sheets regarding nature and risk, criteria for removal and return to play, risks of not reporting an injury, and appropriate academic accommodations. Educational and training programs are currently in place to continually provide both awareness and education and ensure opportunities for students to participate in high school athletics safely.

Accordingly, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on SB840.