

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

2644 Riva Road • Annapolis • Maryland • 21401

BILL: HB1311 EDUCATION - INDIVIDUAL READING IMPROVEMENT PLANS - REQUIREMENTS

HEARING DATE: MARCH 2, 2018

COMMITTEE: WAYS AND MEANS

POSITION: OPPOSE

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The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County opposes **HB1311 EDUCATION - INDIVIDUAL READING IMPROVEMENT PLANS - REQUIREMENTS**. This bill would require each local board of education to develop an individual reading improvement plan for each kindergarten through third grade public school student who has a reading deficiency, to ensure that the student can read at or above grade level by the end of third grade, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. If a student is determined to have a reading deficiency, the school would be required to notify parents, and develop a plan within 30 days of the determination. A local board of education would also be required to establish an intensive acceleration class for any student with a reading deficiency retained in third grade who was also previously retained in kindergarten, or first or second grade, and report to the Maryland State Department of Education annually.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) works to provide a challenging and rewarding educational experience for all children. To that end, our elementary reading classroom is student centered and designed to encourage students to investigate new ways to engage, learn, and achieve through 21st century literacy skills. The AACPS Elementary Reading/ Integrated Literacy program is grounded in current research where children develop language skills by using them in authentic contexts in an environment where students are constantly immersed in language and print. Our program uses a student-centered, integrated instructional approach to ensure that learners become thinking, investigative users of language. We currently screen and assess AACPS students in very similar ways as outlined in the proposed legislation. More specifically, we utilize Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems with all of our students in kindergarten through grade 5. This tool allows us to differentiate reading instruction accordingly for students.

While AACPS supports early literacy and has taken significant steps to ensure that our students are assessed to identify their instructional and independent reading levels, we oppose the prescriptive requirements established under the proposed legislation which create an unfunded mandate that would impose upon local board authority and decision-making.

Accordingly, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB1311.