



HB1255 EDUCATION - BILINGUAL LEARNER PREKINDERGARTEN GRANT PROGRAM

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

SUPPORT

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports **HB1255 Education - Bilingual Learner Prekindergarten Grant Program**. This bill established the Bilingual Learner Prekindergarten Grant Program to provide county boards of education with grants to assist in creating pilot programs to facilitate bilingual education for prekindergarten students. It also requires the Governor, beginning in fiscal year 2022, to include \$1,000,000 for the Program in the annual budget bill and requires the State Department of Education to submit a report to the General Assembly.

AACPS supports additional programs and resources to assist with meeting the varied needs of English Language Learners. We also support adequate State funding for PreK-12 public education is essential in ensuring that all AACPS students have access to the appropriate programs and instructional support they need to meet rigorous standards and expectations and ensure that AACPS is elevating all students and eliminating all gaps.

In AACPS, we have begun to address the needs of English Language Learners through the integration of Spanish literacy instruction in Pre-K. Using a combination of local and federal grant funding, the school system has purchased materials and training on a Spanish literacy enrichment program. We have also hired 11 bilingual teacher assistants to provide small group foundational literacy in Spanish. The response from parents, children, and educators to this new bilingual support in Pre-K has been overwhelmingly positive. HB1255 would provide AACPS with the financial assistance to expand our capacity to meet the language and literacy needs of English Language Learners.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on HB1255.