

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

2644 Riva Road · Annapolis · Maryland · 21401

BILL: HB975 DIGITAL EQUITY FOR ALL MARYLAND STUDENTS ACT OF 2017

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 2017

COMMITTEE: WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

POSITION: SUPPORT

CONTACT PERSON: JEANETTE ORTIZ, ESQ., *LEGISLATIVE & POLICY COUNSEL* (410.703.5352)

The Anne Arundel County Board of Education **SUPPORTS House Bill 975 Digital Equity for All Maryland Students Act of 2017**. This bill establishes the School Broadband Upgrade Grant Program and a related fund to leverage federal funds that are available through the federal E-rate program to install or upgrade Internet access in every public school in the State. The Governor must provide \$9.0 million annually to the new fund for the program. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must administer the program, may adopt regulations to implement the bill, and must report annually to the General Assembly on grants awarded under the program.

The Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) Division of Technology strives to provide excellent customer service when delivering information, technology, support and related resources to the students, teachers, staff and the AACPS community in the most efficient, effective, and equitable manner possible. The grant program established under **House Bill 975** would assist AACPS to fulfill our technology goals. AACPS could utilize funding made available by the proposed grant program to purchase the Category 2 related equipment such as routers, switches, and wireless access points. The above-referenced equipment is expensive, and efforts to reduce the local school system portion of the cost to purchase these items would have a positive impact on our school system.

Accordingly, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on **House Bill 975**.