

# ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

2644 Riva Road · Annapolis · Maryland · 21401

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**BILL:** SB452 EDUCATION - ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM - ASSESSMENTS (LESS TESTING, MORE LEARNING ACT OF 2017)

**HEARING DATE:** MARCH 21, 2017

**COMMITTEE:** WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

**POSITION:** OPPOSE

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

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The Anne Arundel County Board of Education **OPPOSES Senate Bill 452 Education - Accountability Program - Assessments (Less Testing, More Learning Act of 2017)**. As amended, this bill would require local boards of education and exclusive employee representatives to meet and confer regarding school assessments as specified in the bill and, by December 1, 2017, and every two years thereafter, mutually agree to a limited amount of time that may be devoted to federal, State, and locally mandated assessments for each grade. If the parties fail to mutually agree, the time that may be devoted to specified assessments would be limited to 2.2% of the minimum required annual instructional hours for every grade except for eighth grade, which would be limited to 2.3%.

The evaluation of assessments can be complex and Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) would prefer to use our own locally developed rubric in order to evaluate local assessments. Local school districts should have the flexibility of determining the school system's assessment program in conjunction with school administrators and content supervisors. It is essential for the local school systems to maintain control of mandated assessments as well as assessments that are optional in order to improve student instruction. Although the bill has been amended to provide a slight increase in the assessment cap, the caps are still problematic. Many assessments are mandated for federal or state accountability purposes, and counting those in the 2.2% or 2.3% cap on assessments would leave little discretion for local school systems to meet the assessment needs of their students and hinders our ability to provide quality instruction.

AACPS also has concerns regarding the provision in the amended bill which would require meeting with our teacher association representative to mutually agree upon time devoted to assessments on a grade-by-grade basis. This provision in the bill takes away the ability of a school system to determine the best approach for assessing students and determining student progress and learning.

The Anne Arundel County Board of Education supports local decision-making authority of local boards of education. Requiring an artificial cap on testing takes away the ability of a school system to determine the best approach for assessing students, and determining student progress and learning.

Accordingly, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education respectfully urges the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on **Senate Bill 452**.