

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

2644 Riva Road, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education – Sensible Sugar in Schools Act

BILL NUMBER: HB 528

POSITION: OPPOSE

HEARING DATE: February 18, 2016

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

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The Anne Arundel County Board of Education **OPPOSES** House Bill 528. This Bill requires that on or before August 1, 2017, each county board shall add to its federally mandated wellness policy a plan for reducing students' added sugar intake per school meal, including any a la carte items, based on recommendations from the American Heart Association and a work group of parents, students, teachers, school administrators, medical professionals, and nonprofit organizations. The Bill allows for an existing school health council, wellness committee, or wellness team to satisfy the requirements for this Bill. The required workgroup shall hold at least two public hearings and provide an opportunity for public testimony at each meeting. The work group shall study the best practices of other jurisdictions regarding methods of lowering students' total sugar intake per school meal, consider whether the results of the best practices study would be appropriate to implement in the local school system; and make recommendations to the county board based on the results of the best practices study, workgroup discussions and deliberations, and public testimony received at the workgroup's public hearings.

We oppose this Bill for multiple reasons. First, each LEA is unique in what it monitors and implements through its wellness council and school health advisory council. The school system should be able to determine the items to monitor and implement based on the Center for Disease Control's School Health Model. The items for discussion should be based on the need of the district not a predetermined need based on one specific viewpoint, nor should this determination be a legislative issue.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools currently has a high functioning Wellness Council. Their work is presented to the Board of Education every year. This Council includes all components of the CDC School Health Model. Our Wellness Council also includes all business partners, including both Fort Meade and the Naval Academy. Our council is more comprehensive than the aim of this Bill, as it addresses the health and well-being of the whole child and the environment in the school house.

This Bill specifically addresses added sugar. At this time, added sugars are not part of the Nutrient Label. If a school meal and/or a la carte item meet the standards for the United States Department of Health, Maryland State Department of Education and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Smart Snack Calculator then the item should be acceptable for a school system to offer to students. The overall meal should be taken into respect when assessing the benefits to the meal total calories, serving sizes, and variety offered should all be considered. This Bill does not include regulations and guidelines from United States Department of Agriculture and Maryland State Department of Education, both governing bodies for the School Meals Program.

Accordingly, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** Report on House 528.