The Anne Arundel County Board of Education OPPOSES House Bill 1222 - Maryland School Discipline Reform Act. This bill would require that local school systems adopt the Maryland Guidelines for a State Code of Discipline (Guidelines) as their code of student discipline. The bill would also require the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to (1) disaggregate information on student discipline in specified manners; (2) collect information on alternative school discipline practices; and (3) develop and implement, by July 1, 2018, standardized training practices on student discipline for all public school security personnel in consultation with specified State entities. By July 1, 2019, local school systems would be required to provide training to all school security personnel in public schools on the standardized training practices developed by MSDE.

Every local board of education places a high priority on establishing policies and procedures concerning student discipline, based on a framework established by the General Assembly and the State Board of Education. State law reflects the legislature’s recognition that principals and superintendents have broad discretion to make student discipline decisions “as warranted” (Section 7-305 of the Education Article). State regulations long mirrored this deference to local decision making, as well as placing a clear emphasis on maintaining a safe learning environment for all students. The Anne Arundel County Board of Education opposes legislation or regulations that would unduly limit the authority of school administrators and boards of education to ensure the safety of all students and staff and to provide a school environment conducive to teaching and learning for all students. At issue concerning the suspensions and expulsions of students is the balance between the rights of:

- a repeatedly disruptive student to attend a public school or receive publicly funded regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools; and
- students attending a public school to receive thorough instruction during the school year in an environment free of disruptive and detrimental behavior.

The Anne Arundel County Board of Education supports local flexibility to create and enforce consistent and fair disciplinary standards in order to respond to behaviors that violate its Code of Student Conduct. House Bill 1222 would impose a “one size fits all” statewide approach to discipline, dictating under which circumstances schools must implement in-school versus out-of-
school suspensions. This bill would limit the authority of school administrators and the school system to ensure the safety of all students and staff.

Accordingly, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education respectfully requests an UNFAVORABLE committee report on House Bill 1222.