The Anne Arundel County Board of Education SUPPORTS House Bill 288. This bill provides that the State shall be responsible for the student share of costs of: 1) breakfasts provided to all students eligible for a reduced-price breakfast under the federal School Breakfast Program; and 2) lunches provided to all students eligible for a reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Program. A county board may not charge a student who is eligible for a reduced price breakfast or lunch for any portion of the cost of a meal.

House Bill 288 is good for students in Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS), where students receive more than 845,000 reduced price meals a school year. These bills ensure that students living in poverty have access to and can consume nutritious and appetizing meals. With these bills, all students receiving reduced-price meals would be able to participate in the School Meals Programs, thus promoting healthy school environments and ensuring that all students are fueled and ready to learn. By eliminating student payment, schools across the county will see an increase in participation from this eligibility group. House Bill 288 would also help to address unpaid student meal charges, which continue to increase in AACPS.

Accordingly, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education urges a FAVORABLE committee report on House Bill 288.