The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County opposes HB798 Visual Impairments - Requirements for Student Screening. This bill would expand student vision screenings by requiring the administration of a screening (for symptoms of specified vision disorders) designed to detect visual impairments. The bill would also alter notice requirements, and for students who fail the screening for visual impairments, HB798 would require a separate letter containing, among other things, a detailed summary of the potential vision disorder and how it may affect the student’s educational performance must be provided.

The prescriptive requirements established under the proposed legislation create an unfunded mandate that would impose upon local board authority. Current Maryland law mandates vision screening tests for students in public schools. Vision screenings are required in the year that a student enters a school system, enters the first grade, and enters the eighth or ninth grade. In addition, the Maryland State Department of Education is in the process of developing school health guidelines regarding vision screening of students. As such, the proposed legislation is unnecessary.

Accordingly, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County respectfully requests an UNFAVORABLE committee report on HB798.