The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County opposes SB548 Education – Students With Reading Difficulties – Screenings and Interventions. This bill would require county boards of education to ensure that a student is screened to identify if the student is at risk for reading difficulties beginning with the 2019-2020 school year. The bill would also require a county board of education to use certain screening instruments for these students and monitor the students for progress for up to 8 weeks. Finally, a county board of education would be required to report annually to the Maryland State Board of Education.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) works to provide a challenging and rewarding educational experience for all children. To achieve our goal, we envision that every student will graduate from high school able to read critically, write coherently, think creatively, and solve complex mathematical problems. To that end, our elementary reading classroom is student centered and designed to encourage students to investigate new ways to engage, learn, and achieve through 21st century literacy skills. The AACPS Elementary Reading/Integrated Literacy program is grounded in current research where children develop language skills by using them in authentic contexts in an environment where students are constantly immersed in language and print. Our program uses a student-centered, integrated instructional approach to ensure that learners become thinking, investigative users of language.

AACPS supports early literacy, however, the prescriptive requirements established under the proposed legislation create an unfunded mandate that would impose upon local board authority and governance.

Accordingly, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County respectfully requests an UNFAVORABLE committee report on SB548.