The Anne Arundel County Board of Education OPPOSES House Bill 86. This Bill requires that parents of a child with a completed IEP or completed Individualized Family Service Plan may request the document be translated into the parents’ native language within 30 days after the date of the request.

Parents who do not speak English as a first language are provided interpreters to assist them in understanding the IEP and special education process. Anne Arundel County Public Schools utilizes bilingual facilitators who assist parents in understanding the special education process. Although we have been ultimately successful in finding interpreters, it has been very difficult to locate them for the less common languages and/or dialects. During the 2013-2014 school year there were 510 families requiring interpretation at IEP team meetings. Each of these meetings involved documentation. There were multiple meetings for many of these families, adding over 100 additional meetings and 100 additional documents if we were required to translate them. Anne Arundel County Public Schools does not have a translation system, nor do we have staff who can translate for every language represented in our county. There would be an enormous fiscal impact for this requirement. Additionally, the utilization to provide liaisons to assist families with reading, understanding, and interpreting documents is more effective assistance for ELL families than providing a translated document that they may or may not be able to read/understand and that may or may not have been translated accurately.

Accordingly, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue an UNFAVORABLE Report on House Bill 86.