



HB690 EDUCATION - STUDENTS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES - SCREENINGS AND INTERVENTIONS

February 21, 2019

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County opposes **HB690 Education - Students With Reading Difficulties - Screenings and Interventions**. This bill requires each local school board to ensure that specified students are screened to identify if the student is at risk for reading difficulties. If the screening results indicate that the student is at risk of reading difficulties, the local board must conduct an informal diagnostic assessment of the student to determine the specific areas of instructional need for supplemental reading instruction; provide supplemental reading instruction, as appropriate; and provide a notification letter to the student's parent as specified. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must develop and update specified resources, including a reading and dyslexia handbook, for local boards every two years and provide training opportunities annually. Local boards must report annually to MSDE beginning with the 2020-2021 school year.

AACPS supports early literacy, but the prescriptive requirements established under the proposed legislation create an unfunded mandate that would impose upon local board authority and governance. AACPS opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum, courses of instruction, assessments, or graduation requirements, firmly believing that this role belongs to local boards of education in conjunction with the State Board of Education. In creating the State Board and local boards of education, the General Assembly has delegated to them the responsibility for guiding and delivering a high quality statewide system of public education through State standards and accountability measures, and locally governed and administered curriculum, teaching, and learning.

This legislation does not provide an appropriate balance of State accountability and local discretion to achieve State goals for student learning through locally developed reading instruction programs and strategies. More specifically, AACPS opposes the proposed requirements, including the use of an informal diagnostic assessment, structured literacy instruction, and notice to parents of not only the screening results but also the structured literacy reading instruction intervention that will be provided in response. The legislation is overly prescriptive in that it would also dictate the type of reading intervention used by requiring a series of specific instructional strategies. The degree of detail regarding instructional programming is very concerning.

Accordingly, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB690.