



HB96 EDUCATION - HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS - APPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB96 Education - High School Graduation Requirements - Applications for Student Financial Aid**. This bill requires public high school students, beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, to complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid to the U.S. Department of Education or the Maryland State Financial Aid Application to the Maryland Higher Education Commission in order to graduate. The bill provides for exceptions to the new graduation requirement.

AACPS makes great efforts to educate students and families about Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Our high schools host multiple events during the school year to provide information and assistance. While we appreciate the innovation of this legislation, it infringes on local school system decision-making. AACPS opposes efforts by the General Assembly to encroach on local school system authority. The authority to establish graduation requirements is the domain of the State Board of Education and local school systems. Maintaining this authority with the State Board and local school systems allows for collaboration with the State and stakeholders to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable.

Further, this bill negatively impacts the very student populations it seeks to help – those students who are in most need and could most benefit from financial aid to attend college. By making the FAFSA application a graduation requirement, the General Assembly would add another barrier to graduating.

To complete the FAFSA application, a student needs to provide:

- a Social Security Number;
- an Alien Registration Number (if not a U.S. citizen);
- federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned;
- bank statements and records of investments (if applicable);
- records of untaxed income (if applicable); and
- an FSA ID to sign in electronically.

A student who is a dependent will also need this information for the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). The FAFSA is filed electronically, so access to a computer and the internet is also necessary. In addition, this bill requires forced disclosure of personally identifiable information that belongs to the parent(s), but which would have to be shared with the school system. Students and parents may be obligated to show a completed FAFSA, which could result in disclosure of information that is in violation of the Family

Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Additionally, the opt-out clause in the proposed legislation puts the burden on the student or family to opt out. This legislation is too burdensome for students and families, especially for those students and families it professes to help.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB96.