The Anne Arundel County Board of Education OPPOSES House Bill 1351 Education - Foreign Language Requirement - Computer Programming Language Courses. This bill would allow county boards of education to authorize a student to satisfy a State or county middle or high school foreign language requirement by completing a course in computer programming language.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools endeavors to educate students about other languages and cultures through our world and classical languages curriculum. The inclusion of computer programming as a foreign language (world and classical languages) undermines and dilutes the intended value of the foreign language component within public education. The program of studies in each school system is developed as a whole and aligned with the State, and local standards and assessments. Accordingly, the authority to establish curriculum and assessments is the domain of the State Board of Education and the local boards of education. In this way, state and local boards and educators collaborate to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable for their work. Legislation such as House Bill 1351 would only weaken the effectiveness of the entire educational program.

The fundamental purpose of world and classical language instruction is to enable students to communicate in a new language in a culturally appropriate way. The linguistic and cultural insights that come from world language study are essential for citizens in the global community and marketplace – this cannot be achieved through computer programming. Further, as noted in the fiscal note, a student who takes advantage of the graduation flexibility that a local board of education could choose to grant under the bill would not meet the current minimum admissions qualifications at some institutions of higher education including the University of Maryland, College Park campus.

Accordingly, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education respectfully requests an UNFAVORABLE committee report on House Bill 1351.