The Anne Arundel County Board of Education OPPOSES Senate Bill 1137 - Public School Employees - Required Training on Retirement Benefits. This bill would require the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to establish a training program for all public school employees on the retirement benefits that are available to them through the State Retirement and Pension System (SRPS) and the Maryland Supplemental Retirement Plans (MSRP). MSDE would be required to work in consultation with staff from the State Retirement Agency (SRA) and MSRP to provide the training program to public school employees. Each public school employee who is employed by a local school board and is eligible for membership in any SRPS plan or to participate in any MSRP plan would be required to attend the training program annually and provide written confirmation to MSDE that the employee has completed the program.

The mandates in this bill can already be achieved through other resources. For example, school employees currently have online access to information regarding the retirement system and supplemental programs. This information is also available via the State retirement agency, and through communications with their local school system’s human resources department. As such, the training requirements set forth in this bill are unnecessary. Senate Bill 1137 also raises questions concerning when employees would complete the required training and whether local school systems would be required to pay employees to attend the training. Such an arrangement would result in an additional expense that school systems simply cannot absorb given the current fiscal realities. In that regard, this bill is an unfunded mandate that will likely be passed onto local school systems in order to ensure that employees comply with its requirements.

Accordingly, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education respectfully requests an UNFAVORABLE committee report on Senate Bill 1137.