



## HB1421 EDUCATION - ADVANCED COURSES - AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

### OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB1421 Education - Advanced Courses - Automatic Enrollment**. This bill requires, beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, a student who exceeds grade level standards on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA), is identified as gifted and talented, or has reached college and career ready benchmarks on the PSAT, SAT, or ACT be automatically enrolled in an advanced course for the corresponding subject area or areas for the following semester or school year. In addition, local boards of education must use universal screenings to identify gifted and talented students for automatic enrollment in advanced courses. Local boards must annually notify the parents and guardians of enrolled students of the automatic enrollment policy and process, the course offerings, and the benefits of enrolling in advanced courses. The notice must be sent in the primary language of the recipients. The bill also establishes reporting requirements for local boards and requires the State Board of Education to collect and publish specified data.

While well intentioned, this bill is very prescriptive and infringes on local school system decision making. AACPS supports local decision-making authority in developing curriculum, assessments, and instructional programs in collaboration with the State Board of Education. AACPS offers AP courses in all of our high schools. AP courses allow high school students to experience college-level instruction, and possibly receive college credit by sitting for one or more AP exams in May. This legislation removes the student voice and legislates local school system decision-making regarding educational programming. Although AACPS strongly believes in removing barriers to students taking Honors and advanced placement (AP) courses, the decision to pursue Honors or AP courses involves the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). We believe it is essential for students and their parents/guardians to be involved in this important decision-making process.

We also have concerns with the provisions in the bill that provides for only one mechanism to identify a gifted and talented student. AACPS identifies gifted and talented students via multiple measures. Using only one metric, a State standardized assessment, would leave out other students that may be gifted and talented in other areas and in other ways.

Additionally, AP enrollment is already addressed in The Blueprint for Maryland's Future in a manner that balances the importance of encouraging students to enroll in rigorous courses, local school system authority, and the student and parent/guardian voice.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB1421.