



HB19 EDUCATION - SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION - PEDESTRIAN SAFETY PLANS (SAFE WALK TO SCHOOL ACT)

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APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB19 Education - School Construction - Pedestrian Safety Plans (Safe Walk to School Act)**. This bill requires a local board of education that is seeking State funds for the construction of a new public school or for the renovation or addition to an existing school, under specified circumstances, to submit a pedestrian safety plan to the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC). It also requires pedestrian safety plans to be developed in collaboration with the State Highway Administration (SHA) and county departments of transportation and, requiring IAC to review submitted pedestrian safety plans in consultation with SHA.

While AACPS clearly supports the concept of safe and appropriate walking and biking routes to schools, the creation of a detailed pedestrian safety plan appears to be unwarranted. As AACPS does not have any control over sidewalks or bike paths that extend beyond the edge of our public school property lines, any identified gaps would be outside the school district's ability to remedy. As most county departments of public works and transportation already produce transportation functional master plans and routinely undertake walk-shed/bike-shed studies, such activities would appear to be more suitably placed in those departments. This is supported by the fact that county government, not the local board of education, has jurisdiction to acquire rights of way and make infrastructure improvements within communities.

The State will not participate in the cost of the study, so this bill is also an unfunded mandate for AACPS. The unfunded mandate would have an estimated fiscal impact of approximately \$30,000 per public school construction project site in order to have a transportation engineering consulting company undertake the requisite study, hold the public hearings, and produce the finished pedestrian safety plan report. Given that AACPS could potentially undertake five qualifying projects per year, it could amount to at least \$150,000 in unfunded expenditures per fiscal year.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB19.