



HB119 COUNTY BOARDS OF EDUCATION – CURRICULUM GUIDES AND COURSES OF STUDY – REQUIREMENTS

March 29, 2023

EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

OPPOSE

Grace Wilson, Legislative & Policy Specialist (410.440.1758)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) strongly opposes **HB119 County Boards of Education – Curriculum Guides and Courses of Study – Requirements**. As amended by the House of Delegates, this bill requires all curriculum guides, courses of study, resource materials, and other teaching aids prepared by local school systems to be in accordance with the policy and guidelines for the program of instruction in public schools adopted by the State Board of Education. If the Superintendent of Schools determines that a local board of education is not following every element of the policy or guidelines established, or is authorizing a student opt-out of a course of instruction in a manner that is not approved by the State Board, the State Superintendent must notify the local board of education. If the local board does not resolve the discrepancy within 30 days, 10% of the funds budgeted by the State for the current fiscal year must be withheld. If the discrepancy is not resolved within 90 days, an additional 10% must be withheld. Finally, the bill requires that the State Comptroller release the funds if the State Superintendent determines that the local board has resolved the discrepancy.

As introduced, this bill focused on health education, and AACPS opposed the bill as it intruded on local control over curriculum and instruction. However, this bill as amended would result in a total state takeover of local control of all curriculum frameworks, standards, and even instructional materials.

Currently, the authority to establish curriculum and assessments is the domain of the State Board of Education and local boards of education, the same entities charged with researching, investigating, and evaluating both curriculum and assessments. Maintaining this authority with the State and local boards allows for collaboration between local boards of education, the State, and stakeholders to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable. The State Board has established State standards and graduation requirements and local boards of education implement locally developed curriculum to ensure that State standards are met and students are prepared to meet graduation requirements. In this way, the State, local boards of education, and educators collaborate to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable for their work. AACPS supports their local decision-making authority in developing curriculum, assessments, and instructional programs in collaboration with the State Board of Education.

HB119 is a radical change to Maryland education policy that has always balanced state and local control regarding state standards and local curriculum. This bill mandates that local school systems follow “every element of the policy and guidelines for the program of instruction” for public schools established by the State Board of Education, and that “all curriculum and guides, courses of study, resource materials, and other teaching aids” be in accordance with the state policy and program of instruction adopted by the State Board.

This bill would result in the immediate state takeover of any local discretion or flexibility to develop and deliver instruction in every subject and grants absolute authority to the State Superintendent to decide if a local school system is not following every detail of the state standards and then withhold millions of dollars in state funding.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB119.