



SB657 ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY – STUDENT LOAN ASSISTANCE REPAYMENT PROGRAM FOR EDUCATORS – ESTABLISHED

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Education, Energy, and the Environment

SUPPORT

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports **SB657 Anne Arundel County – Student Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Educators - Established**. This bill authorizes the Anne Arundel County Council to create the Anne Arundel County Student Loan Assistance Program for educators to assist in the repayment of student loans owned by educators employed by AACPS. The purpose of the program is to attract, recruit, and retain a diverse cadre of qualified educators in AACPS reflective of the student population within the county. Qualifying loans include a loan for undergraduate or graduate study that is obtained for tuition, educational expenses, or living expenses from a college, university, government, commercial, or nonprofit source. In order to benefit from the program, individuals must receive a graduate, professional, or undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university, be employed by AACPS, commit to serve in AACPS for a period of not less than five years, and receive an income that is less than the maximum eligible total income levels established by the County Council. Finally, the bill authorizes the Anne Arundel County Council to establish additional criteria for the program.

We recognize the educational benefits of a diverse workforce that enriches the educational experience of all AACPS students. Investing in the development of highly effective teachers and leaders that reflect our diversity and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and high-quality education for all AACPS students ensures that all students can grow, belong, and succeed.

AACPS teachers are valued as leaders and actively participate in making decisions that impact teaching and learning at the school level. We are proud of our teacher workforce and value them as a critical asset in contributing to student academic achievement. The Board believes that the quality of education is directly dependent on the quality of the teacher workforce, which is directly impacted by the school system's ability to recruit and retain high-quality educators.

AACPS supports resources such as loan assistance repayment programs to help recruit a more diverse teacher workforce. This program would provide a mechanism for educators employed by AACPS to receive student loan repayment assistance, if funded by the Anne Arundel County Council. Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on SB657.