



HB1173 PUBLIC SCHOOLS - STUDENT MEAL PROGRAMS AND MEAL CHARGE POLICIES

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

Jeanette Ortiz, Esq., Legislative & Policy Counsel (410.703.5352)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB1173 Public Schools - Student Meal Programs and Meal Charge Policies**. This bill requires each county board of education to establish a meal charge policy that addresses payment for school meals, unpaid meal debt, prohibition of stigmatizing actions, and other issues related to the administration of school meal programs and management of payments for school meals. Each county board must at least annually review and update its meal charge policy, must publish the policy on its website, provide the policy to students at the beginning of each school year, and provide the policy to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). MSDE must create and maintain a database of the county board meal charge policies and publish them on the MSDE website. Each school must provide each student and certain parents with printed information and assistance related to free or reduced meal programs.

While we oppose HB1173, we are supporting **HB1152 Public Schools - Student Meal Programs and Policies** with amendments as that legislation aligns with school system best practices. AACPS recognizes that School Meals are an important part of our students' health and wellness. Food & Nutrition Services operates a comprehensive program aligned with the Centers for Disease Control School Health Model and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

While, AACPS' existing practices align with the majority of requirements contained within the proposed legislation, this bill is an unfunded mandate that infringes upon local school system operations.

Several provisions in the legislation also add operational and reporting requirements, which are extremely prescriptive and result in operating costs. This is an unfunded mandate. In addition, the bill requires that some provisions be carried out in printed/paper format rather than in our existing on-line/electronic format. This requirement is also an unfunded mandate. As stated, AACPS already aligns with most of these best practice provisions and we see no need to impose a prescriptive legislative solution or to absorb the additional unfunded costs associated with HB1173.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB1173.