



HB1499 EDUCATION - PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS - FINANCIAL LITERACY CURRICULUM

March 4, 2020

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB1499 Education - Public High Schools - Financial Literacy Curriculum**. This bill requires the State Board of Education to 1) develop curriculum content for a semester-long course in financial literacy that contains specified content and 2) establish criteria for a student to demonstrate financial literacy competency based on that content. Each local board of education must implement the curriculum in every public high school under the board's jurisdiction. In order to graduate from a public high school, a student must complete the course and demonstrate financial literacy competency as defined by the State Board of Education.

While HB1499 is well intentioned, AACPS opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate public school curriculum. The authority to establish curriculum and assessments is the domain of the State Board of Education and the local boards of education, the same entities charged with the responsibility to research, investigate, and evaluate both curriculum and assessments. This allows local boards of education to collaborate with the State and stakeholders to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable.

Maryland has already taken proactive steps to ensure that all of our students are financially literate by implementing Personal Financial Literacy Education Standards in grades 3-12 in every public school. The State has established a Financial Literacy Education Council to support local school system implementation activities and has partnered with financial institutions and other organizations to provide ongoing professional development for teachers. In addition, public and private partnerships help fund financial literacy initiatives in local schools.

AACPS strongly supports financial literacy and we have also taken steps to ensure that all students have a strong foundation in financial education to make informed decisions and accomplish their educational goals. In 2007, we approved a one-semester Financial Literacy course for high school students as an elective. Since then, AACPS has developed additional elective courses in financial literacy. Additionally, AACPS has integrated financial literacy standards into multiple content areas, including math, social studies, family and consumer science, and language arts. As such, the current efforts by the State and local boards of education is the preferred approach rather than a State legislative mandate that such a course be a graduation requirement, which may not ensure that students are financially literate.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB1499.