



## HB165 EDUCATION - SEXUAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PROGRAM - HUMAN AND SEX TRAFFICKING

March 23, 2022

EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

### OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB165 Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking**. The bill requires that the age-appropriate education program on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault developed and implemented by the State Board of Education and each nonpublic school include, for students in grades 6 through 8, material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking.

Maryland schools provide their students with a comprehensive Pre-K–12 health education curriculum that focuses on a student’s development of protective life skills and promotes health and well-being. As part of this comprehensive health education curriculum, AACPS students are educated in Family Life and Human Sexuality as well as Safety and Violence Prevention. Students participate in age-appropriate instruction on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault. This instruction includes age-appropriate instruction on the meaning of “consent” and respect for personal boundaries.

While this legislation is well-intentioned, AACPS opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate local public school curriculum or assessments. The authority to establish curriculum and assessments is the domain of the Maryland 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. Maintaining this authority with the State Board and local boards allows local boards of education to collaborate with the State and stakeholders to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable.

AACPS is committed to an ongoing and thorough review of curricula and materials of instruction to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are promoted and evident. AACPS has a committee that reviews curriculum and materials of instruction. Representatives from all stakeholder groups including parents/guardians, teachers, and students are included in the review process. However, it is important to note that this legislation would require additional funding to create curriculum and assessments in grades through 8 and, thus, creating an unfunded mandate as the creation of curriculum and assessments is a thoughtful and time consuming process which involved various stakeholders. AACPS opposes unfunded mandates.

Again, the district’s opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of teaching any particular subject matter, certainly not education about sexting, but rather on the school system’s opposition to statutorily mandating the teaching of any one concept or content item as well as the opposition to unfunded mandates.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB165.