



## **SB856 PUBLIC SCHOOLS - HEALTH SERVICES - SCHOOL NURSES**

March 8, 2022

EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

### **OPPOSE**

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **SB856 Public Schools - Health Services - School Nurses**. This legislation requires each county board of education to provide a full-time registered nurse at each public school.

AACPS recognizes the importance of developing a healthy school environment which promotes student health, well-being, and the ability to learn. To that end, AACPS currently collaborates with the Anne Arundel County Department of Health to provide staffing support from registered nurses, health assistants, and nurse supervisors in all AACPS health offices. However, the Department of Health is currently experiencing a nursing shortage in the district. In fact, there are 12 such vacancies at this time. As such, the Department's Director of School Health has been compelled to utilize an outside agency to support schools until vacancies are filled.

Under this bill, either AACPS or the Anne Arundel County Department of Health would be required to hire 35 additional registered nurses at a cost of approximately \$2.5 million in salaries per school year. AACPS opposes legislative efforts and proposals that reduce or circumscribe local authority or create unfunded mandates.

It is important to note that county registered nurses are ineligible for State retirement benefits and this reality contributes to high turnover rates. Perhaps addressing this issue is something the General Assembly can consider.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on SB856.