



## HB953 PARENT AND GUARDIAN RIGHTS - EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN

February 25, 2022

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

### OPPOSE

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

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB953 Parent and Guardian Rights - Education, Health, and Upbringing of Children**. This bill requires that the State Board of Education and county boards of education allow a certain amount of time for certain testimony at public board meetings. It prohibits an employee of a school district from withholding information relating to a child's health or well-being from the child's parent/guardian. The bill also requires each county board to establish and adopt a policy regarding the promotion of parent involvement in the public school system.

AACPS already has a policy and regulation regarding parental involvement in schools. The school system recognizes that engaging parents/guardians in the educational process is essential to improved academic success for students. We further recognize that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and the family during the entire time a child attends school. In addition, AACPS already has procedures and practices in place to advise parents/guardians of school curriculum and to object to curriculum content.

That being said, AACPS strongly opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate local 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 researching, investigating, and evaluating both curriculum and assessments. Maintaining this authority with the Maryland State Board of Education 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. New courses are presented to the Board for review and approval.

AACPS currently publishes content standards on their public facing academic websites. The public can, at any time, go to the website and review the courses and the standards within those courses. In addition, library materials are outlined on the school system's website. Additionally, at the beginning of the year, students in middle and high school receive course syllabi for each of their courses. In elementary school, parents receive grade level curriculum letters that outline the concepts taught in the four marking periods. AACPS' new learning management system also allows parents/guardians to view their student's classroom materials. This learning management tool allows AACPS the opportunity to create a more robust school-home partnership to support all students.

Finally, this legislation is unnecessary as the public may contact the Superintendent and the members of the Board with any concerns regarding AACPS curriculum. Parents/Guardians, students, and members of the community also have the opportunity testify at regularly scheduled public meetings of the Board.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB953.