

**Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 953
Parent and Guardian Rights - Education, Health, and Upbringing of
Children**

**Ways and Means
Friday, February 25th, 2022
12:00 p.m.**

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The Maryland State Education Association opposes House Bill 953, which would require each county board to establish and adopt a certain policy to promote parental involvement in the public school system, provide that number of prescribed parental rights are reserved to the parents and guardians of minor children, and prohibit the State and certain other entities from infringing on those rights, except under certain circumstances.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students for the careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

The goal of a high-quality public education is to bring together students of all races, classes, identities, and experiences to grow their understanding of the world and prepare for their futures. Yet some politicians seek to divide parents and educators, key players in children's education, to advance self-serving narratives. This bill claims to simply promote parental involvement, but its provisions are largely redundant and undermine educators' professional judgement at the expense of children's education.

Many of the requirements in this bill are redundant; for example, information about graduation requirements, school policies, report cards, and other elements of a child's academic progress are already available to families. This bill seeks to extend



requirements to an unreasonable degree by mandating that parents be notified at length about all instructional materials, extracurricular activities, and curricular standards in their child's course of study. Such mandates would represent a tremendous increase in educators' workloads to no apparent benefit. Engaging families by answering questions about instructional content and sharing updates on their child's academic progress or wellbeing is an essential piece of an educator's role. The framing of this bill wrongly implies a lack of transparency and seeks to place parents and educators in conflict, despite their shared interest.

Educators and families alike want all children to receive an accurate, high-quality education that meets their needs and allows them to pursue their dreams. When families and educators work together, we can equip our students and schools with the resources to deliver quality education that prepares every child for the future. The provisions in this legislation are redundant, overreaching, and function only to sow division between the parties most invested in students' success. **We urge the committee to issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 953.**