



HB678 EDUCATION - FINE ARTS - CURRICULUM REQUIREMENT, STUDY, AND REPORT (ARTS EQUITY IN EDUCATION ACT)

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB678 Education - Fine Arts - Curriculum Requirement, Study, and Report (Arts Equity in Education Act)**. This bill requires, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, county boards of education to provide in public schools a certain instructional program in fine arts. It requires the State Department of Education to study and make recommendations on or before July 31, 2023, regarding compliance with a certain regulation relating to instructional programs in fine arts. It also requires, for FY 2024 through FY 2026, the Governor to include \$25,000,000 in the annual budget to carry out the Act.

AACPS has a robust program in all areas of fine arts in alignment with current State regulations and requirements. We have worked diligently to create high quality Pre-K-12 curriculum in dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts. These curricula provide learning opportunities for all students to engage in the arts. 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, however, 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.

While AACPS appreciates the \$25 million appropriation in the legislation, this is insufficient to cover the cost of implementing the requirements of the bill at all 24 local education agencies in the State. It, therefore, creates an unfunded mandate, which AACPS opposes.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB678.