



HB938 EDUCATION - SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY - PARENT EMPOWERMENT AND CHOICE

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB938 Education - School Accountability - Parent Empowerment and Choice**. This bill authorizes parents/guardians of students attending public schools that are not meeting State accountability goals to request county boards of education to implement certain intervention strategies such as a restart model or a school closure model, by gathering signatures on a petition of more than 50% of the parents/guardians of students impacted by the failing school. The bill requires a county board, within 60 days of receipt of a petition, to make a certain determination, in writing, regarding the petition.

Local governance by boards of education is essential to a comprehensive system of public education. Retaining local board authority allows for collaboration and cooperative planning within the local community rather than through top-down decisions from the State. In fact, Section 4-101 of the Education Law Articles states, “educational matters that affect the counties shall be under the control of a county board of education,” and that local boards of education, “determine, with the advice of the county Superintendent, the educational policies of the county school system.” Local boards of education receive and rely on public input and are best able to address local needs. The relationship between the community and local public schools encourages participation by parents/guardians and other community members in the educational process so that everyone has responsibility for and ownership of public education. Retaining decision-making authority at the local level allows local boards of education to best balance educational practices, available resources to implement those practices, public input, and accountability. AACPS opposes efforts to interfere in Local control of educational policy, curriculum, budgets, and administration.

Finally, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint), a landmark, generational piece of legislation intended to enhance and improve the State and local investment in Maryland public education provides for a myriad of accountability measures. The Accountability and Implementation Board created by the Blueprint will have the ultimate authority to ensure that school districts are implementing the many accountability provisions in the Blueprint law. The Blueprint has been in effect for less than a year, and AACPS believes that the General Assembly should allow school systems to implement the bill as intended instead of passing piecemeal legislation that will interfere with the current work school districts have undertaken since passage of the law.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB938.