



SB95 PUBLIC SCHOOLS - ANAPHYLACTIC FOOD ALLERGIES - GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

February 3, 2022

EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

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

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports with amendments **SB95 Public Schools - Anaphylactic Food Allergies - Guidelines and Requirements**. This bill requires each local board of education to adopt and implement guidelines, in accordance with the Maryland State School Health Service guidelines, to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents (specifically, major food allergens) in classrooms and common areas. Each public school must develop a system to disclose, within a reasonable time in advance of service, the foods served in the school and the major food allergens contained in the food. The principal of a public school that has a child attending with an anaphylactic allergy must monitor and implement the strategies developed in accordance with the Maryland State School Health Service guidelines and the guidelines established by the local board of education as required by the bill.

AACPS has a policy and regulation that support students with a known anaphylactic allergy or who are exhibiting symptoms of an anaphylactic allergy. AACPS also complies with the Maryland State School Health Service Guidelines issued jointly by the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents in classrooms and common areas. The school system continues to work with school nurses, parents/guardians, and students with food allergies. We post all nutrition information including allergy information on the AACPS website and in the lunch serving line. Additionally, AACPS coordinates with our county Department of Health regarding school meals and students with allergies. The communication is open and robust, both with staff and students.

While we support the intent of the legislation, we do have concerns with some of the requirements set forth in the bill. For example, we have concerns with the language in the bill requiring school systems to “**ENSURE THAT STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO FULLY PARTICIPATE IN ALL SCHOOL SPONSORED EVENTS, AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND FIELD TRIPS.**” This would be difficult to ensure given the varying impact food allergies have on different students. In fact, it is at times best practice to actually limit activities to minimize the risk of anaphylaxis. We respectfully request that this provision be stricken from the bill. In addition, AACPS does not currently require private groups holding functions in our schools to announce or make attendees aware of allergens. We have concerns with the ability to implement this provision and respectfully request that this language also be stricken from the bill.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on SB95.