



HB78 – PUBLIC SCHOOLS – ANAPHYLACTIC FOOD ALLERGIES – GUIDELINES

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WAYS AND MEANS

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports with amendments **HB78/SB120 – Public Schools – Anaphylactic Food Allergies - Guidelines**. This bill requires each county board of education to adopt, implement, and publish guidelines, in accordance with the Maryland School Health Services guidelines, to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents, specifically major food allergens, in classrooms and common areas. At a minimum this guidance shall designate school areas that are food free, designate tables in the cafeteria to be used by students with anaphylactic allergies that are free of foods containing major allergens, and provide guidance for food distributed by outside public or private individuals or groups, among other requirements. This bill also requires each public school to develop a system to disclose the major food allergens contained in the foods served in schools.

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 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, the requirement to single out students with a known anaphylactic allergies at designated tables is of concern as it removes current school system flexibility to meet the needs of students with known anaphylactic allergies on a case-by-case basis and may encourage student bullying. Additionally, AACPS feels that the bill's requirements to designate a food free school zone is not achievable. AACPS respectfully requests that these provisions be stricken from the bill.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on HB78.