



House Bill 1091

Education - Screening Requirements for Students With Reading Difficulties - Alterations

MACo Position: **SUPPORT WITH
AMENDMENTS**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: March 8, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1091 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would expand the eligibility of students subject to screening for reading difficulties and would require schools to provide supplemental reading instruction for a greater number of students whose screenings suggest reading trouble.

Current law requires reading screenings for students transferring from one public elementary school to another and for schools to provide supplemental reading instruction for students screened as having reading difficulties, as well as progress monitoring, annual reporting requirements, and evaluation of the screening program.

HB 1091 would require screenings for any student transferring to a public school, at any grade level, as well as to all students whose families' primary language at home is one other than English. Presumably, with the substantial increase in screenings, the demand and requirement for supplemental reading instruction will also increase.

Counties and local education agencies understand the critical importance of healthy vision in the success of our students. Counties have been engaged on various iterations of this bill for a long time and welcome further collaboration on it. However, counties are concerned with the potentially significant fiscal impact of HB 1091 to schools and counties – especially those associated with more of the student body receiving supplemental reading instruction, which could require hiring additional staff.

HB 1091 would benefit from amendments to address this concern. As such, MACo proposes the following amendment:

- **Any costs associated with the increased required supplemental reading instruction shall be funded by the State through aid or relevant resources in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.**

Counties welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee on these suggested amendments to better align the bill's goals with the realities and needs of the local jurisdictions and school systems who would be bound to carry out the bill's charges. For these reasons, MACo requests a report of **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** for HB 1091.