



HB770 – PUBLICLY FUNDED FULL-DAY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM – TIER I CHILD – ALTERATION OF DEFINITION

February 22, 2023
WAYS AND MEANS

SUPPORT

Grace Wilson, Legislative & Policy Specialist (410.440.1758)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports **HB770 – Publicly Funded Full-Day Prekindergarten Program – Tier I Child – Alteration of Definition**. Local school systems are currently required to provide prekindergarten services to all children with disabilities, children who are homeless, and children who are from a home in which English is not the primary spoken language. However, these students are not included in the definition of a Tier I child and are excluded from the calculation of the state and county shares of funding for prekindergarten programs. AACPS and other local school systems are not receiving appropriate reimbursement for serving these children. This bill correctly identifies children with disabilities, children who are homeless, and children from a home in which English is not the primary spoken language as Tier I children for the purposes of publicly funded prekindergarten programs.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future significantly changes State education policy and proposes a long-term phase-in of mandated increases in State and local funding for public education. These increases represent the commitment Maryland must make to fully and equitably fund a world class public education for all of Maryland's nearly 1 million students. The Blueprint seeks to develop a robust mixed-delivery system of early childhood programs and services to support families and their young children, support the early childhood workforce, address special needs, and promote high-quality early childhood experiences. This includes providing enhanced prekindergarten services to children with disabilities, who are homeless, or who speak a language other than English at home.

As expectations and standards rise, increased per-pupil spending is necessary to continue the education success of student in Anne Arundel County and the State of Maryland. Adequate funding for prekindergarten – 12 public education is essential to ensuring that all AACPS students have access to the appropriate programs and instructional support they need to meet rigorous standards and expectations, and that AACPS is elevating all students and eliminating all gaps.

AACPS is currently serving 75 prekindergarten students who speak a primary language other than English and 129 prekindergarten students with individualized education programs (IEPs) that are Tier 2 and 3 income eligible. AACPS is not receiving appropriate reimbursement for serving these students and is spending over \$2 million to educate these students. Correctly identifying these students as Tier I children for the purposes of calculating prekindergarten enrollment and state and county funding for publicly funded full-day prekindergarten programs is essential to meeting the requirements of the Blueprint.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on HB770.