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of Howard County**

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**Board of Education of Howard County  
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House Senate,  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
April 2, 2025**

**HB1127: UNFAVORABLE  
Public Schools - Water Safety - Instructional Content**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **Public Schools - Water Safety - Instructional Content** as a mandate on educational curriculum that goes beyond the scope of what school systems are able to provide.

HB1127 requires local school systems to develop instructional content on water safety that would be incorporated into the health or physical education curriculum for each school in the county. The content must be age-appropriate for students at all levels and include opportunities for students with disabilities if practicable. Beginning in school year 2026-2027 each county board shall implement the instructional content by offering at least once in elementary, middle and high school.

New National Standards for Physical Education (PE) do include outcomes related to water safety as indicated in this bill. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) recently formed a Standards Framework Validation Committee to determine the best approach for updating the State PE Standards based on the new National Standards. As a legislative platform the Board supports local decision making in the development of curriculum that accounts for a balance of educational practices, available resources, public input, and accountability that is informed and guided by State Board established standards and models, rather than legislative mandates as encompassed in HB1127.

Amendments made by the House prior to the passage of HB1127 removed requirements related to swimming and development of a plan for in-water training, which would have posed additional costs to local school systems including liability and teacher certification or extensive professional development to ensure staff have the proper training in swim instruction/safety when monitoring their class. While improved, the bill maintains a curriculum mandate.

For these reasons, we urge a UNFAVORABLE report on HB1127 from this Committee.