



HB1546 EDUCATION - REPORTABLE OFFENSES – ALTERATIONS

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JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB1546 Education - Reportable Offenses - Alterations**. This bill alters the definition of a “reportable offense” that is reported to local school officials and the procedures that specified law enforcement officials and local school systems must follow when a reportable offense occurs.

Communication among stakeholders is essential in helping to maintain school safety. As such, AACPS supports legislation that eliminates impediments to communication among school system, law enforcement and juvenile justice officials. AACPS opposes legislation that incorporates a “one size fits all” philosophy or unduly limits the authority of school systems to provide a school environment conducive to teaching and learning.

The single most important strategic goal of the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County is to ensure that every student meets or exceeds standards as achievement gaps are eliminated. As such, AACPS believes that specific emphasis should be on increasing underrepresented student groups, including our students who have been charged with reportable offenses. At the same time, safety in public schools remains increasingly important to local boards of education as school-related security incidents and threats in Maryland and throughout the nation have increased over the years. Ultimately, school systems must strike a balance between the educational rights of all students, including students charged with a reportable offense, and the school system’s responsibility to educate all students in a safe environment that is conducive to learning.

A fundamental requirement for openness and responsiveness is an ability to effectively communicate with stakeholders in a comprehensive and holistic fashion. This legislation is a dramatic step back from the 2010 revisions made in Maryland law that were specifically designed to facilitate increased stakeholder collaboration and allow for enhanced educational programming for students charged with a reportable offense.

In sum, HB1546 would significantly and unacceptably reduce the communications abilities between allied stakeholders when events occur outside of the school but have the potential to catastrophically impact school operations. Specifications in the bill that impose administrative hurdles to implementation of the safety strategies necessary create an onerous and unsafe burden upon local school systems.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB1546.