



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,
Appropriations Committee
March 1, 2022**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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**HB0783: UNFAVORABLE
Public Schools - Mold Assessment and Remediation**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **HB0783 Public Schools - Mold Assessment and Remediation**.

By June 2023, HB0783 requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health, to adopt regulations establishing uniform standards for mold assessment and remediation in public schools. The regulations must include standards for identifying and evaluating the presence of mold, and mold remediation in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency's 2008 Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings, as well as require each county board to establish a formal process for reporting potential mold in schools, as soon as practicable hire a professional certified to perform mold assessments to conduct a visual inspection, remediate any mold identified, and pay the costs of the mold assessments and mold remediations. Mold assessments must be reported to MSDE who must also post results online.

While the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Indoor Environmental Quality staff support the intent of HB0783/SB0575 as much of the requirements are similar to current practices in Howard County, the uniform standards to be adopted have the potential to become unfunded mandates on the school system. Additionally, specific provisions of the bill are concerning, including:

- The collection of mold samples is not typically required, and should not be a mandatory part of a mold assessment as defined under the bill.
- The provision that calls for, as soon as practicable after receiving a report of potential mold in a public school, the school system must "hire a professional certified to perform mold assessments to conduct a visual inspection of the area with the potential mold" indicates this would be an outside consultant, which takes away local control to use in-house qualified staff to perform this function
- Staff is unaware of an existing mold assessment certification as referenced in the bill.
- Reporting to the State/MSDE requires a significant amount of paperwork which is time consuming for local school systems whose resources would be better spent on conducting assessments and remediation. In Howard County, particular attention is paid to reporting incidents to the local community in order to be directly responsive, and reporting to MSDE would be redundant.

For these reasons, we urge a UNFAVORABLE report of HB0783 from this Committee.

