



SB364 ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY - BOARD OF EDUCATION - PARENT'S RIGHT TO CHALLENGE CURRICULUM ACT

February 16, 2022

EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **SB364 Anne Arundel County - Board of Education - Parent's Right to Challenge Curriculum Act**. This bill authorizes a parent/guardian in Anne Arundel County to sponsor, sign, and circulate a petition to challenge the use of certain curriculum in a course taught in a public school in Anne Arundel County. The bill also establishes requirements for the contents of a petition, public hearings, a vote on the subject of a certain petition, and public notice of certain processes and hearings.

AACPS opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate local public school curriculum. The authority to establish curriculum and assessments is the domain of the State Board of Education and the local boards of education, the same entities charged with researching, investigating, and evaluating both curriculum and assessments. Maintaining this authority with the Maryland State Board of Education and local boards allows local boards of education to collaborate with the State and stakeholders to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable.

AACPS is committed to an ongoing and thorough review of curricula and materials of instruction to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are promoted and evident. AACPS has a committee that reviews curriculum and materials of instruction. Representatives from all stakeholder groups including parents/guardians, teachers, and students are included in the review process. New courses are presented to the Board for review and approval.

This proposed legislation would usurp the authority of the Superintendent and the Board to establish curriculum and to select materials of instruction as currently authorized by State law. This bill would interfere with local authority to develop and approve curriculum in accordance with State Board of Education content standards. Section 4-111 of the Education Article provides that "Subject to the applicable provisions of this article and the bylaws, basic policies, and guidelines established by the State Board, each county board, on the written recommendation of the county superintendent, shall (1) Establish curriculum guides and courses of study for the schools under its jurisdiction..." Under the banner of this State authority, the statute requires the local superintendent to "prepare and recommend for adoption by the county board: (1) Curriculum guides; (2) Courses of study; (3) Resource material; and (4) other teaching aids in accordance with Section 4-205 of the Education Article.

It is also important to note that the Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires the Maryland State Department of Education to develop curriculum standards and resources for each subject at each grade level, that build on one another in logical sequence, in core subjects that may be used by local school systems and public school teachers. Finally, this legislation is unnecessary as the public may contact the Superintendent and the members of the Board with any concerns regarding AACPS curriculum. Parents/Guardians, students, and members of the community also have the opportunity testify at regularly scheduled public meetings of the Board.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on SB364.