



HB1152 PUBLIC SCHOOLS - STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS AND PROHIBITIONS ON SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports with amendments **HB1152 Public Schools - Student Bill of Rights and Prohibitions on Suspensions and Expulsions**. This bill provides that each student in a public school in the State has certain rights as a student. It also alters the types of conduct for which a student may be suspended or expelled.

The promise of public education is for every child to succeed in school and life. To realize this promise, every child must be given resources, supports, and interventions based on their individual needs. AACPS is committed to fulfilling this promise to all students and dismantling barriers to school-home partnerships. AACPS believes in the value in creating opportunities for students to practice and succeed in making responsible and effective choices to reach their academic potential and contribute to the school community. All students deserve a safe, supportive, and orderly learning environment.

AACPS appreciates the goal of this legislation which clearly states student rights and places limitations on suspensions and expulsions. The district, however, does request amendments to ensure that the bill can be effectively implemented. First, the district recommends that the committee reconsider the use of the term “rights” throughout the bill. Enumerating specified rights in law could have unintended legal consequences and result in confusion. For example, the bill proposes to guarantee “equal access to school sports” in a manner that could be interpreted to strictly limit the operation of selective participation on school sports teams or participation in specific athletic events.

In addition, AACPS requests that the language beginning in line 2, on page 3 be amended to the following **“~~THAT IS ONLY THE STUDENT INTENDS ONLY TO BE DISRUPTIVE TO A SCHOOL~~ ACTIVITY, FUNCTION, PROCESS, OR THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.”** The inclusion of language regarding a student’s intent is vague and will lead to inconsistent interpretation and implementation.

The district also requests that that references to discipline in the bill align to existing MSDE student discipline guidelines. While State law provides that principals and local superintendents have certain discretion to make student discipline decisions “as warranted”, State regulations have supplemented the law by providing much more detailed requirements. State regulations now balance that deference to local decision making by placing a clear emphasis on maintaining a safe learning environment for all students and ensuring progressive discipline policies including restorative practices.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on HB1152.