



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES



**Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
SB 116: Public Schools - Inclusive and Diverse English Language Arts -
Development of Content Standards and Implementation**

February 3, 2022

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council and The Arc Maryland are statewide advocacy organizations committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). **We support the intent of SB 116, which would require the Maryland State Department of Education to develop content standards for inclusion, diversity, and equity in the language arts curriculum.**

It is important to highlight and promote the diversity of Maryland, including people with disabilities. In fact, over 112,000 students with disabilities receive special education services and supports, and represent 12.4% of the student population in Maryland. That percent is similar to the total population in Maryland.

In order to truly promote diversity and equity, and encourage safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students, the content of the curriculum should not be limited to considerations for just “mental and physical disabilities.” It should capture the broader community of people with disabilities. Therefore, we strongly recommend the following changes:

- On page 2, line 4 - add “neurodiversity”
- On page 2, line 9 - remove “mental and physical”

It is important that our academic standards are built to reflect the historical and intellectual contributions of diverse populations, and encourage environments that respect and welcome all people, including people with disabilities. **These two changes will do just that.**

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