



MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

850 Hungerford Drive ♦ Room 123 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850



Bill: House Bill 141
Title: Education - Education Accountability Program - Limits on Testing
Committee: Ways and Means
Date: February 11, 2016
Position: **OPPOSE**
Contact: Michael Durso, President, Montgomery County Board of Education

The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes House Bill 141.

Maryland law does not currently limit the amount of time devoted to federal, state, or local testing. It is important to note that Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is fully aware of the impact of testing on instructional time and has developed a plan to decrease the amount of time secondary school students participate in “standardized” assessments and add two weeks of instructional presented a plan to replace two-hour semester exams with in class marking period assessments.

Furthermore, many details are left out of this proposed legislation. First, Federal and State testing are mandated and are not negotiable. Therefore, if any reductions to current testing time are required, the only flexibility in compliance with the proposed legislation would be through reduction of locally mandated assessments. Second, with respect to the language limiting testing, “... limit the amount of time ... to 2% of the minimum required instructional hours ...” The need for clarification arises from potential variation in interpretation. Test time may be calculated using ‘seat time’, the time students spend in a testing environment, or opportunity time, as measured in blocks of time (morning, afternoon, or day) that are used for testing and therefore no instruction goes on during the block of time. Finally, exclusions of time devoted to “teacher selected” quizzes and exams does not take into account MCPS’s effort to create districtwide consistency in formative assessments in key academic areas. It is suggested that MCPS formative assessments, due to their role of guiding instruction, should be excluded from the testing limit in the legislation.

Even if there is no potential fiscal impact, if it becomes necessary to reduce centrally developed districtwide formative assessment in middle and high school, the primary impact would be a reduction on class teacher planning time which would instead be used for teacher-created formative assessments.

For these reasons, we oppose this bill and ask for an unfavorable report.