



MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

850 Hungerford Drive ♦ Room 123 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850



Bill: House Bill 528
Title: Primary and Secondary Education - Sensible Sugar in Schools Act
Committee: Ways and Means
Date: February 18, 2016
Position: **OPPOSE**
Contact: Michael Durso, President, Montgomery County Board of Education

The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes House Bill 528.

This bill directs county Boards to add to its federally mandated wellness policy a plan for reducing students' added sugar per school meal, including any a la carte items. This bill directs county Boards to convene a workgroup to study best practices of other jurisdictions regarding methods of lowering students' total sugar intake per school meal and consider whether the results of the best practices would be appropriate to implement in local school systems. Additionally, an existing school health council, wellness committee or wellness team that satisfies the above may constitute the workgroup.

This legislation creates an unnecessary burden on local districts. All foods and beverages available to students in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) meet and/or exceed United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Maryland State Department of Education regulations. Meals are planned, nutritionally analyzed and served according to guidelines. Meal planning does not include incorporation of significant amounts of added sugars; products such as yogurt and chocolate milk incorporate small amounts of added sugar for flavor. A tablespoon of syrup is available when pancakes or French toast is served. Since added sugar is not a typical ingredient in foods and beverages available to students, language in nutritional analysis software measures carbohydrates which represents a combination of starches and sugars. Sugar, by itself, either natural or added, is not an identified nutrient by USDA. Large amounts of added sugar are not prevalent in school meals. A la carte items have prescribed limitations regarding fat, saturated fat, calories, trans fats, whole grains, and sugar. Sugar content of products are identified by the food label on each product.

On behalf of my colleagues on the Board of Education, thank you for your consideration and we urge an unfavorable report.