



## HB1258 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION - EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS – ESTABLISHED

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

### OPPOSE

Jeanette Ortiz, Esq., Legislative & Policy Counsel (410.703.5352)

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB1258 Primary and Secondary Education - Educational Options – Established**. This bill establishes the Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today Program to provide certain students with scholarships for students who are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program to attend a nonpublic school. It establishes the Maryland Public Charter School Authority as a public chartering authority under the Maryland Public Charter School Program with certain powers and responsibilities. The bill also allows a parent/guardian a credit against the State income tax for certain home instruction expenses.

AACPS opposes the diversion of public education funds to nonpublic schools. AACPS specifically opposes the use of tuition tax credits, tax deductions, or vouchers as a means of reimbursing parents/guardians for their children's nonpublic educational expenses in Pre-K–12.

Maryland local school systems are committed and required to serve all of the State's school-aged children who are not enrolled in other educational institutions or programs regardless of religious preferences, ability to pay tuition, or special needs. In the public education system, students are exposed to a wide variety of courses and programs aimed at educating and preparing them for graduation, college and career readiness, and full participation in their communities. In pursuit of these goals, local and State accountability measures are used to ensure that the public schools are fulfilling their mission.

Generally, nonpublic schools are not subject to the same legal requirements as public schools such as special education laws and teacher certification regulations. As such, nonpublic schools have no direct accountability to taxpayers for their use of tax revenues.

Additionally, the diversion of public education funds to nonpublic schools is likely to have serious economic, constitutional, legal, and public policy consequences. If public education funds were used for the support of nonpublic schools, fewer resources would be available for public elementary and secondary schools. Further, the diversion of public education funds to nonpublic schools would impede the ability of localities to ensure an appropriate, safe, and equitable education for all students.

Finally, AACPS opposes efforts to expand the sole authorization of public charter schools beyond local boards of education. By creating the Maryland Public Charter School Authority, this legislation seeks to diminish the authority of a local board of education. AACPS believes that charter schools should only be established in response to an unmet need or resources a school system cannot provide. Accordingly, charter school providers should collaborate with the school system, in a strategic manner, to ensure alignment with school district initiatives for additional school choice for students and parents/guardians.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB1258.