

UNFAVORABLE
House Bill 1027
Education – Primary and Secondary Schools – Alternative School Options

House Ways and Means Committee
February 21, 2024

Lauren Lamb
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association strongly opposes House Bill 1027, which seeks to establish a school voucher system and codify the Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) Program.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students for the careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

All children should have access to a high-quality education in their local public school, regardless of zip code. Yet instead of supporting more resources for our State's public schools, this bill would strip their much-needed funding and channel it to private schools. We made an incredible investment in Maryland's children by passing the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. To see it through, we need to ensure that public funds – taxpayer dollars – support the operation of public institutions that serve all students, not unaccountable private entities.

We are especially troubled by the provision stating that county boards should promote military boarding schools to the family of any student whom "the school administrator determines is violent." This is dangerously undefined, stigmatizing language that fails to recognize the importance of supporting students in crisis. Overall, this bill advocates for a troubling diversion of public resources to private schools and would undermine our State's goal of working toward a high-quality public education for all students.

We strongly urge the committee to issue an Unfavorable Report on House Bill 1027.

