



# Maryland Education Coalition



Ellie Mitchell & Rick Tyler, Jr. – Co-Chairs

Web site - [www.marylandeducationcoalition.org](http://www.marylandeducationcoalition.org) \*\*\* Email – [md.education.coaliton@gmail.com](mailto:md.education.coaliton@gmail.com)

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[HB1027](#) - Education - Primary and Secondary Schools - Alternative School Options (Right to Learn Act)  
House Ways and Means Committee  
POSITION – STRONGLY OPPOSE

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) advocates for adequate funding, equitable policies, and transparent accountability statewide for all students in Maryland’s public schools, regardless of their academic, cultural, economic, geographic, racial, or other demographic status. Our mission and primary purpose have always been based on the **Maryland Constitution, Article VIII – Education, SECTION 1., which says – “The General Assembly, ..., shall by Law establish throughout the State a thorough and efficient System of Free Public Schools; and shall provide by taxation, or otherwise, for their maintenance”.**

**MEC supports adequate, equitable investment of public money for public and approved private schools for students with disabilities only without discrimination. MEC also opposes the use of any public operating or capital funds for vouchers, tax credits, or tax subsidies for all other non-public, private, parochial, or home schools including the BOOST Program.** This has consistently included the BOOST programs and any initiative that may take public operating or capital funds or resources away from FREE public schools. Besides, Maryland Public Schools have many alternative education options.

Therefore, **MEC strongly opposes HB1027 - Alternative School Options (Right to Learn Act) and urges the committees to issue an unfavorable report.** This bill, if passed, is another attempt to modify policies to remove public funds from public school systems, schools and students permanently or temporarily that are required to educate all public school students. It would add additional unfunded responsibilities to the state and Local education departments and take funds away from public school systems, schools, programs, and students based on faulty assumptions and misunderstandings of how public schools are made up and operate using funds intended for all public school student. Also, most if not all nonpublic schools WILL NOT provide similar data for the Maryland Report Card, nor report comparable academic performance or school climate data for all schools and students they enroll Therefore, there is no evidence, each nonpublic school is as good or better for all.

**Example 1 -** When asked – *“Does a poor star rating mean my school is bad?”*, MSDE response - *“The star rating is a snapshot of how a school or school system performed during the previous year on a handful of factors. The grades are to be used to identify areas that are performing strongly or areas that are in need of improvement.”*  
(Source: MSDE’s [GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING YOUR 2023 MARYLAND SCHOOL REPORT CARD](#), page 26)

**Example 2 –** The Maryland Report Card and the Star Rating system does not consider various school types, such as:

- A school that significantly or only enrolls students with disabilities.
- A school with a significant enrollment of students with Limited English, or highly transient foster or homeless students
- Non-traditional or Alternative Schools that temporarily enroll students that may expelled, school or court-referred School-Referred (must be referred by your current school and agree to the Student Enrollment Contract).
- A Vocational or Career-technology program that focuses on skills or courses not included in the Maryland Report Card

**Besides, Maryland cannot afford the BOOST Program.** Revenue for the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Closing Fund Balance is projected to have a \$429 million deficit by FY 2027 - rising to over \$5.1 billion by FY 2029 and the Maryland must reserve all available revenue the promises to Fully Fund the Blueprint that do not apply to non-public, private, parochial, or home. MEC is still receiving reports that some nonpublic schools that currently receive funds for BOOST are still using subtle methods to exclude some students who may be identified as having Special Needs or Limited English.

Therefore, MEC urges the Maryland House Ways and Means Committee and their General Assembly colleagues to issue an unfavorable report for HB1027 -- Alternative School Options (Right to Learn Act). Maryland public schools deserve it.

ACLU of MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Arts Every Day, Attendance Works, CASA, Children’s Behavioral Health Coalition, Free State PTA, Decoding Dyslexia of Maryland, Disability Rights Maryland, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Ed, Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition, MSC-NAACP, Maryland Out of School Time Network, Maryland School Psychologists’ Association, Parent Advocacy Consortium, Public Justice Center, School Social Workers of MD, Strong Schools Maryland, Kalman R. Hettleman, David Hornbeck, Rick Tyler, Jr., Sharon Rubinstein