



**HB764 EDUCATION - BROADENING OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TODAY
PROGRAM - ESTABLISHED AND MANDATED FUNDING**

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB764**. This bill establishes the Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today Program to provide scholarships for students who are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program to attend a nonpublic school. It requires the State Department of Education to administer the Program and adopt regulations to implement the Program. The bill also requires the Governor, beginning in fiscal year 2022, to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$15,000,000 for the Program.

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.

We are facing unprecedented times as result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has significantly impacted education, school systems, students, and families. 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. The diversion of public education funds to nonpublic schools would also impede the ability of localities to ensure an appropriate, safe, and equitable education for all students. Further, students in schools with limited parental/guardian and community support would be disadvantaged. AACPS and school systems across the State are already facing decreased funding as a result of the pandemic and diverting additional public funds away from public schools would have negative impact on public education.

It is also important to note that, unlike public schools, private schools have no direct accountability to taxpayers for their use of tax revenues.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB764.