



HB266 STUDENT EDUCATION EQUITY GRANT PROGRAM - ESTABLISHED (STUDENT EDUCATION EQUITY IN FUNDING ACT)

February 3, 2021

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB266 Student Education Equity Grant Program - Established (Student Education Equity in Funding Act)**. This bill established the Student Education Equity Grant Program in the State Department of Education to provide grants to eligible students to attend an open public or nonpublic school approved to operate in the State. An open school is defined as a school that is providing full in-person classes and has not restricted any sports or extracurricular activities. The bill authorizes students whose assigned school is not open to apply to the Department for a grant to be used for expenses to attend an open school. It further requires the Department to establish an application process, distribute grants, enter into certain agreements, and provide information to students.

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 HB266.