

SUPPORT HB0939

Madame Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Thank you for accepting my written testimony in SUPPORT of HB0939 - Student Education Grant Program

Our BCPS schools closed in March of 2020 for 2 weeks that then turned into 3 months due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic.

Despite a BCPS survey taken over the summer with results showing the majority of parents, students and staff preferred hybrid or in-person learning for the fall, BCPS chose to remain virtual.

Virtual learning, although is subject to strict government and district guidelines, is not the same quality of education as in the classroom, in-person learning.

Kids have different learning needs and parents must be allowed to choose the best education that meets their needs. There are few choices as personal and important as the educational environment into which our children are immersed for most of their waking hours however many parents just can't afford the tuition for private schools which have been open fully, in-person, five days a week since September, 2020. They are given no choice but to sit their child in front of a computer all day using Virtual Learning which does not adequately provide the academic, social and emotional growth our students need.

I am a grandmother of one child who, until this current school year, was a student enrolled at Baltimore County Public Schools. Her public-school education began four years ago when she started Pre-K. She also attended the same BCPS Elementary School up until the beginning of the 20-21 school year. She has been enrolled in Private school since September 5, 2020 and is in Second Grade.

Let me be clear, private school was not a choice but a forced decision caused by the fact that BCPS was clearly not going to offer in-person learning starting in September, 2020 and that virtual learning was not a platform for which my granddaughter would excel from.

Private School tuition, uniforms, books, etc. was not something our family budget was prepared for on top of loss income due to COVID lockdowns and has put a significant strain on the family budget. However, my granddaughter is one of the fortunate kids because we found the means to make it happen. Private School has proven to be very beneficial for my granddaughter not only educationally, but emotionally as well. The extra expenses and strain on the family budget has been "totally" worth every single penny we have invested in her schooling.

My granddaughter's yearly tuition is \$4,750 dollars a year as well as approximately \$1,000 other added expenses (uniforms, books, food, art supplies, school supplies, transportation, etc.) As I have stated before, the extra expenses of Private School have put a strain on the family budget but with the approval of HB0939 the Student Education Grant Program would help supplement a large amount of those expenses.

If the public schools in Maryland do not fully open in the Fall of 2021, all families should receive the support needed to make an appropriate educational choice for their children. Tax dollars should follow the child. I fully support this bill that provides families with some assistance to choose an in-person educational option.

Thank you very much for reading my testimony and I urge you to support this legislation.

FUND STUDENTS-NOT SYSTEMS

Sincerely,

Mary A Taylor

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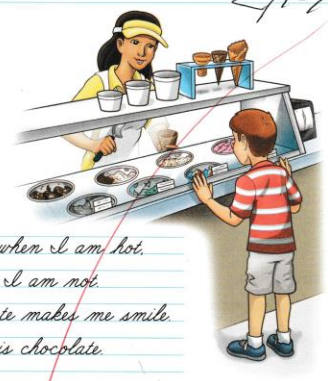
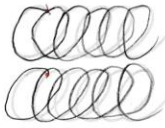
District #7

Example of My Granddaughters Classwork – 2nd grade

Cursive Writing and Thinking Skills

2/10/21

1. Warm up.



2. Copy the riddle.

*I love to go there when I am hot,
and sometimes when I am not.
The cool, creamy taste makes me smile.
My favorite flavor is chocolate.
Where am I going?*

*I love to go there when I am hot,
and sometimes when am not,
The cool, creamy taste makes me smile -
My favorite flavor is chocolate -
Where am I going*

3. Answer the riddle in a complete sentence.

my first ice cream place

Additional Practice