



HB415 OPERATING BUDGET - FUNDING - SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NONPUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

March 1, 2022

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB415 Operating Budget - Funding - Scholarships for Nonpublic School Students**. This bill requires the Governor, beginning in fiscal year 2024, to include in the annual budget bill General Fund appropriations of certain amounts for the Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today 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.

Maryland local school systems are committed and required to serve all of the State's school-aged children who are not enrolled in other educational institutions or programs regardless of religious preferences, ability to pay tuition, or special needs. In the public education system, students are exposed to a wide variety of courses and programs aimed at educating and preparing them for graduation, college and career readiness, and full participation in their communities. In pursuit of these goals, local and State accountability measures are used to ensure that the public schools are fulfilling their mission.

Generally, nonpublic schools are not subject to the same legal requirements as public schools such as special education laws and teacher certification regulations. As such, nonpublic schools have no direct accountability to taxpayers for their use of tax revenues.

Additionally, 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. Further, the diversion of public education funds to nonpublic schools would impede the ability of localities to ensure an appropriate, safe, and equitable education for all students.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB415.