

**SB 706**  
**Nonpublic Educational Programs – Children with Disabilities – Cost of  
Teacher Salaries**

Budget & Taxation Committee  
March 2, 2022

**Favorable**

Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports SB 706 which would allow nonpublic special education schools to align their teachers' salaries with their counterparts at public schools.

Inspired by the Gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. For almost 100 years, Catholic Charities has operated programs that allow Marylanders to age with dignity, obtain empowering careers, heal from trauma and addiction, secure stable housing and welcome new neighbors. We recognize the importance of providing children living with disabilities a full continuum of quality educational opportunities.

Catholic Charities operates the Villa Maria School which provides educational and clinical services for children with significant emotional, behavioral and learning challenges. Located in Baltimore County, the school serves students from four jurisdictions. Students are referred by the home school district. Funding for the placements is provided by a mix of local and state dollars.

The Villa Maria and other nonpublic special education schools are part of a broader continuum of educational placements for youth with disabilities. Unfortunately, the funding for nonpublic schools has not grown at the same pace as the public school systems. This has resulted in a significant salary disparity between the two which has in turn resulted in a workforce shortage. It is nearly impossible to recruit teachers to work in a highly specialized environment for 12 months of the year – when a 10-month general (or special) education position in the public schools pays significantly more.

We fear that with out SB 706, this existing inequity will continue to grow as the new salary scales included in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act are realized. Teachers are at the forefront of shaping our society for generations to come and should be compensated accordingly. That includes both the teachers who serve the general education population and the teachers who are serving specialized populations.

**For the reasons listed above, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 706.**

Submitted By: Regan Vaughan, Director of Advocacy