



SB706 NONPUBLIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS - CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES - COSTS OF TEACHER SALARIES

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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 **SB706 Nonpublic Educational Programs - Children With Disabilities - Costs of Teacher Salaries**. This bill requires the State and certain counties to pay for costs of salaries for teachers at nonpublic educational programs that is equivalent to the average salary of public school teachers with similar training and experience.

AACPS believes all students are entitled to challenging instruction from highly qualified professionals that addresses their unique learning needs and differences. The district supports recommendations of educational professionals regarding participation in programs that provide the best opportunities to support and accelerate achievement for students with disabilities.

While AACPS appreciates the amendments to the bill which specify that the Governor would appropriate funding for the salaries of nonpublic special education teachers, the district is still concerned about the impact this legislation will have on available State funding for public school education. The requirement for the State to fund these salaries will divert funding from public school education, which AACPS opposes.

It is of particular concern to AACPS that the bill, as amended, does not actually require a nonpublic school to increase teacher salaries. In fact, the legislation was amended to simply require a nonpublic school to “prioritize enhancements to teacher salaries” with no minimum increase stated and no accountability measures in place to ensure that such funding would indeed go towards increased teacher salaries. Currently, nonpublic schools set tuition amounts without limitation and there is nothing in State law or regulations that require a nonpublic to increase teacher salaries when tuition fees are increased. The cost of these tuition increases is borne by local school systems. Ultimately, this bill, as amended, has the potential to decrease public school funding while continuing to burden local school systems with tuition fee increases, and no guarantee that nonpublic special education teachers will be compensated at a rate equivalent to the average salary of public school teachers with similar training and experience.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on SB706.