

February 15, 2023

**House Bill 448 – Nonpublic Education – Special Education Placements – Renaming and Teacher Salaries (Teacher Pay Parity Act)
House Ways & Means Committee| House Appropriations Committee**

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

The Summit School is one of the few schools in Maryland exclusively serving students with dyslexia and other learning differences in grades 1-8. Literacy is infused throughout the program and students receive explicit instruction in every subject. Our school is widely recognized for academic excellence and researched-based methodologies. Summit's excellent reputation attracts students from nine surrounding counties, some of whom commute up to two hours to attend school.

As drafted, House Bill 448 would require the State and certain counties to pay for costs of salaries and bonuses for teachers at special education placements in a certain amount and proportion; and generally relating to special education placements for children with disabilities and salaries for teachers at special education placements. Unfortunately, in its current posture, teachers at The Summit School would not have access to the proposed pay parity even though they have public placement students.

Pay parity discriminates against schools who, even though they are Type 1 like The Summit School, have very few funded students. Raising the day rate for five students does not provide the revenue to increase all teachers' pay in line with the county salary scale. An alternate to pay parity should be considered for these Type 1 schools because as a Type I, Special Education School, certified by the state of Maryland, we have to abide by:

- a. COMAR 13A.09.10 Code of Maryland Regulations for Educational Programs in Nonpublic Schools and Child Care and Treatment Facilities and COMAR 13A.08.04 Student Behavior Interventions. These regulations are the same regulations required of schools that are in a position to benefit from pay parity.
- b. Highly trained teachers and staff at The Summit School serve a unique role to maximize students' strengths and support areas of weakness and must have the same credentials required of teachers in other Type 1 schools.

The Summit School serves only a small fraction of students who could benefit from research-based, explicit instruction tailored to meet the needs of bright students who learn differently. The expertise of our teachers and staff allows our students to excel and grow in their communities. After graduating from Summit, our students have a 98%

graduation rate which is well above the 84% national average graduation rate for all students (71% is the national average graduation rate for students who have been classified with a specific learning disability.)

Unfortunately, without pay parity from the State, the only option The Summit School would have would be to raise tuition causing many possible students with learning differences not to get the education they need to excel.

Increasing the day rate may not be an effective solution for reaching pay parity and so we would like to work with the committee to explore additional funding strategies to ensure equity across all Type 1 schools. Schools should have the option to go for pay parity or a stipend at the very least. **It is for these reasons we politely ask the committee considers amending House Bill 448.**

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