



**PSSAM**  
Public School Superintendents' Association  
OF MARYLAND

**Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director**  
1217 S. Potomac Street  
Baltimore, MD 21224  
410-935-7281  
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

---

**BILL:** HB 675

**TITLE:** Primary and Secondary Education - Education Savings Account Program - Established (Maryland Universal School Choice Act)

**DATE:** March 7, 2024

**POSITION:** Unfavorable

**COMMITTEE:** House Appropriations Committee

**CONTACT:** Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

---

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 675.

House Bill 675 seeks to establish an Education Savings Account (ESA) program in the State, which would provide grants to families to defray specified costs related to nonpublic or homeschooling for eligible students. This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to administer the program. Additionally, this bill allows a subtraction modification under the Maryland income tax for deposits into an education savings account under the Education Savings Account program.

PSSAM opposes any public financing for private schools, including education savings accounts and the use of public financing tools for families choosing non-public schools. Under the proposed ESA program, the State would be required to provide taxpayer funds directly to private schools. While seemingly not a voucher program, this program uses public dollars to fund private schools and divert scarce resources away from the public education system that serves 90% of American children.

Additionally, PSSAM opposes the proposal to allow a new Education Savings Account program to provide grants to parents for home instruction expenses. Maryland's long-standing approach to homeschooling establishes very limited educational, reporting, and verification requirements for parents choosing to homeschool their child. In fact, current regulations simply require parents to sign a form verifying that they will provide "regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age," consent to

requirements to keep a portfolio of the student's work, and submit to semester evaluations by school system staff. This is the limited extent of any governmental role in the education of home schooled children. Local superintendents do not seek additional oversight in Maryland's homeschooling regulations, but oppose any public incentive for more families to opt into homeschooling.

PSSAM does not support increasing the burden on state revenues and future state budgets by establishing an income tax credit to benefit parents who exercise their choice to provide their children with home instruction. Unlike public schools, homeschooling parents have no means of direct accountability to taxpayers for their use of tax revenues. Funds provided to parents through ESA programs in other states have been found ripe for fraud and abuse -- in 2018, the state's Auditor General in Arizona found that parents misused over \$700,000 in ESA funds on items such as beauty supplies and sports apparel, with no way for the state to recoup misspent money.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 675 and requests an unfavorable committee report.