



March 5, 2025

To Chair Feldman and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

At Salisbury Christian School, we wholeheartedly support Senate Bill 879, which would extend dual enrollment opportunities and financial aid eligibility to nonpublic and homeschool students. These changes align closely with our core values of reverence, respect, relationships, and responsibility, as well as our vision to engage, excite, and equip students to become resilient learners, passionate world changers, and steadfast followers of Jesus Christ.

Reverence calls us to honor the God-given potential in every student, and this bill recognizes that students in nonpublic and home school settings deserve the same access to higher education opportunities as their public school peers. By removing financial barriers and expanding eligibility for dual enrollment programs, the bill affirms the dignity and value of every learner, empowering them to develop their God-given gifts and pursue academic excellence.

Respect is at the heart of our school community, and this bill reflects a broader respect for the diverse educational choices families make. Parents who choose Christian education or homeschooling do so with great intentionality, seeking an environment that nurtures both academic growth and spiritual formation. Allowing these students to participate fully in state-supported dual enrollment opportunities acknowledges and honors those choices, ensuring that all students have access to the resources they need to thrive. Additionally, to safeguard religious freedoms, any state funding for dual enrollment programs should be directed straight to the college or university rather than the nonpublic school, ensuring that participation does not compromise the school's independence or mission.

Relationships are a cornerstone of our mission at Salisbury Christian School, and we see the inclusion of nonpublic and home school students in these programs as an opportunity to build stronger connections between secondary schools and institutions of higher education. This bill encourages collaboration between Christian schools like ours and colleges across the state, creating pathways for students to grow academically, deepen their faith, and prepare for their future callings. Our school also recognizes that maintaining fiscal responsibility and long-term sustainability may require setting a reasonable limit on the number of dual enrollment courses covered by the grant, with families responsible for any additional course costs beyond that limit.

Finally, responsibility is a value we instill in our students, urging them to take ownership of their education and their futures. By expanding access to early college coursework, this bill equips students to be proactive in their learning journeys, developing the skills and perseverance they will need to become the resilient learners and passionate world changers we seek to cultivate - ultimately having a positive impact in the state of Maryland and across the United States.

At Salisbury Christian School, we are deeply committed to supporting our students in their pursuit of academic excellence, including those who participate in dual enrollment courses. As part of that commitment, we already provide financial assistance by covering the cost of books and lab materials for our students enrolled in these programs. We believe that eliminating financial barriers is essential in equipping students to take full advantage of these valuable opportunities. The proposed state grant funding would further ease the financial burden on families, and we stand ready to continue our investment in our students by coming alongside this initiative. By working together with state resources, we can ensure that more students have the ability to engage in rigorous college-level coursework that prepares them for their future academic and career goals.

At Salisbury Christian School, we believe that every student should have the opportunity to develop their God-given talents and pursue academic excellence without unnecessary barriers. Senate Bill 879 would allow more students to engage in rigorous coursework, gain valuable college experience, and step confidently into the future God has planned for them. We urge lawmakers to support this bill and stand with us in preparing the next generation of leaders who will make a meaningful impact on our community.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steven M. Lamkin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steven" being the most prominent part.

Steven M. Lamkin, Ed.D.
Head of School
Salisbury Christian School