



OPPOSE: House Bill 455

Education – Certification of Scholarship Granting Organizations (Opting in on Opportunity Act)
House Ways and Means Committee

February 26, 2026

The Blueprint Coalition, a 30+ member organization representing hundreds of thousands of Marylanders and co-led by representatives of Strong Schools Maryland and the Maryland Education Coalition, is committed to ensuring the full implementation and funding of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. **The Blueprint Coalition urges an unfavorable vote on House Bill 455, which would require the Maryland State Department of Education to certify scholarship granting organizations in order to enable participation in a new federal tax credit program that subsidizes private school tuition.**

Maryland has made a historic commitment through the Blueprint to fully and equitably fund public education. House Bill 455 moves the State in the opposite direction. By facilitating participation in a federal tax credit scholarship program, this bill would create a new mechanism to subsidize private school tuition while public schools remain responsible for serving every child, regardless of need, disability status, language background, or income.

Although the tax credit operates through the federal tax code, the effect is clear: it incentivizes individuals to redirect tax liability into contributions to private school scholarship organizations. That shifts resources and policy focus away from the public system at a time when Maryland is still working to meet the full funding commitments of the Blueprint.

Public schools educate more than 850,000 students and are required to provide services to students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students living in poverty, and students with complex academic and behavioral needs. Private schools that would benefit from these scholarships are not held to the same accountability, access, or transparency standards.

Maryland is already facing fiscal pressure in fully funding compensatory education, special education, collaborative time, and community schools under the Blueprint. The State should not be creating new incentives that divert attention and energy away from strengthening the public system.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was designed to ensure equity and accountability in public education. House Bill 455 introduces a parallel structure that subsidizes private education without equivalent public accountability and without any requirement to serve all students. At a time when we are working to close achievement gaps and stabilize funding for high-need students, Maryland should

be reinforcing its commitment to public schools, not opening the door to policies that weaken that commitment.

For these reasons, we strongly urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 455.

Please contact Riya Gupta at riya@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.