

School Choice

(Adopted 1992; amended 1995, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2005; readopted 2008, 2011)

WHEREAS, public schools in Maryland are committed to serving all of the state's children, while private/parochial schools can control the nature of the pupil population served; and

WHEREAS, provisions for public school choice currently exist intra-district; and

WHEREAS, the federal No Child Left Behind Act requires states and local school systems to provide intra-district student transfer options for students in low-performing and "persistently dangerous" schools; and

WHEREAS, the No Child Left Behind Act requires school systems to provide parents of certain students enhanced choices among private supplemental educational service providers for after-school tutoring; and

WHEREAS, provisions for interdistrict choice may exist when both systems agree; and

WHEREAS, private/parochial schools are not subject to the same legal regulations in areas such as teacher certification, student assessments and other accountability measures, and special education, thus making true competition impossible; and

WHEREAS, private/parochial school choice programs include vouchers, which are direct payments of taxpayer money by the government for private/parochial school tuition, and tuition tax credit programs, which offset expenditures for private/parochial school tuition by reducing a person's tax liability; and

WHEREAS, private/parochial school choice programs are not linked to measures that would improve failing schools, but would remove scarce public funds from the schools that have the most desperate needs; and

WHEREAS, funding for voucher and tuition tax credit programs is typically insufficient to finance the full cost of tuition at many private/parochial schools, thereby leading to increased isolation of socio-economic groups, while creating a subsidy for more affluent parents;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Maryland Association of Boards of Education supports local discretion to develop and implement policies that facilitate intradistrict public school choice, including public charter school policies, and opposes efforts to establish private/parochial school choice programs in the state.