



**Maryland's Voice for  
Nonpublic Education**

**RABBI ARIEL SADWIN**  
*President*

**GARRETT J. O'DAY, ESQ.**  
*Chair, Steering Committee*

**P. GEORGE TRYFIATES**  
*Director, Federal Programs*

**23 WALKER AVE**  
**SUITE 102**  
**BALTIMORE, MD 21208**  
**P 1: 410-484-3632**  
**P 2: 443-510-4501**  
**F: 443-450-3748**

**EMAIL: [INFO@MDCAPE.ORG](mailto:INFO@MDCAPE.ORG)**  
**WEB: [WWW.MDCAPE.ORG](http://WWW.MDCAPE.ORG)**  
**TWITTER: [@MD\\_CAPE](https://twitter.com/MD_CAPE)**

## 2016 Legislative Session Recap

### Textbook Program and Nonpublic Aging Schools Program:

Both of these valuable programs were level funded at \$6 million and \$3.5 million, respectively, within the FY 2017 state budget. The Nonpublic Aging Schools Program survived yet another “chopping block” threat. However, we encourage you to continue to thank your state legislators for the \$3.5 million that we’ll enjoy for a fourth year in a row. Allocations will continue to vary from year to year, depending on the number of schools who apply. As a sidebar, this is a good time to remind any of you who have yet to obtain reimbursement for *previous years’* projects to make sure you retrieve your school’s allocated funds from MSDE.

It is important to note that one change was made to the Textbook and Technology Program. For next year, any schools wherein more than 40% of students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals (aka FARMS) will receive a significant increase in allocation – from \$95 to \$155. The other two tiers will essentially remain the same, meaning that schools having 20-40% FARMS-eligible students will receive \$95 per student and schools having fewer than 20% FARMS-eligible students will receive up to \$65 per student.

### Maryland Education Credit:

As many of you know, the Maryland Education Credit initiative sought to afford our nonpublic school families scholarship assistance through corporate investment, incentivized through state tax credits. By the time the first hearing for the Maryland Education Credit was held, there were an unprecedented six similar proposals to incentivize businesses to donate toward nonpublic school tuition assistance!

Separate bills entitled the “Maryland Education Credit” were put forth by Governor Hogan, Anne Arundel Senator James “Ed” DeGrange and Baltimore City Delegate Antonio Hayes. Collectively, these bills enjoyed wide bipartisan co-sponsorship. Another proposal, entitled “Building Options and Opportunity for Students and Teachers” or BOOST, was put forth by House of Delegates leadership, led by Delegate Keith Haynes. Lastly, the Governor’s budget proposals included a “business entity grant program”, rather than a tax credit, but nonetheless akin to the Maryland Education Credit model.

In a strong showing of support for the aforementioned measures, we again welcomed over 700 nonpublic school students, administrators, teachers and parents for one of the best Nonpublic School Advocacy Days that we’ve had to date. Thanks to all of you who sent a group from your school. It meant a lot to our state legislature to see our students take part exciting rally right outside of the Maryland State House, attended by a bipartisan group of sponsoring legislators, including Senator DeGrange and Delegate Hayes, as well as Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford.

Subsequently, hearings for each Maryland Education Credit bill were held simultaneously with the BOOST proposal. Thanks to each of you who contributed to or arranged for testimony for these bills, as it truly made an impact on this movement. In the end, these tuition assistance proposals were a significant matter of debate amongst the Conference Committee assigned to rectify House and Senate differences in the state budget. As many of you know, that is where a significant amount of peripheral legislative matters are decided, despite not being directly relevant to the state budget.

As noted above, it is with great pleasure that we report to you that Maryland's first ever school choice measure emerged from the final day of Conference Committee negotiations. The Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today Program (BOOST) will provide \$5 million in nonpublic school scholarships for qualifying students in the upcoming 2016-17 school year.

### **Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today Program (BOOST):**

The Maryland State Department of Education has just finished formulating the guidelines and procedures and the State is now accepting online applications for BOOST scholarship awards the 2016-17 school year.

Students eligible for free and reduced meals are eligible to apply for a tuition scholarship, whether they currently attend a nonpublic school, or attend a public school but would like the opportunity to attend a nonpublic school. **We ask that you all to promote this program to the best of your ability and encourage as many income-eligible families as you can to apply. There is a printable flyer attached to aid you in this. It's imperative that we show our state legislature the vast need for continuation and expansion of this program!**

Here's how income-eligible families may apply:

1. Visit [www.marylandpublicschools.org/BOOST](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/BOOST) to find a List of Eligible Schools. Contact the school directly to be sure they intend to participate in the BOOST program and then apply to the school(s) of your choosing. You must take steps toward applying to at least one school before you can apply for a scholarship.
2. Apply for a BOOST scholarship at: [www.marylandpublicschools.org/BOOST](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/BOOST)

The application deadline is Monday, July 11, 2016, 11:59 p.m.

### **Other MISCELANEOUS legislation:**

Maryland CAPE monitors hundreds of bills every year. Here are just a few noteworthy highlights pertinent to our nonpublic schools:\

**“Erin’s Law” – sexual abuse awareness and prevention training:** “Erin’s Law” will require public and nonpublic schools that hold a Certificate of Approval from MSDE (“church-exempt” schools are exempt) to incorporate a child sexual abuse protection curriculum into their health curriculum. The lead sponsor cited some nonpublic schools as organizations that have led the way in setting an example for other child-serving organizations in implementing practices to assist children in recognizing and reporting suspect behavior in order to protect children from future or continued harm. ***The State Board of Education is in the process of adopting regulations to carry out the bill and will likely notify schools when they are available.***

**Student Diabetes Management Program:** Legislation was again proposed to require schools to have a diabetes management program for each applicable student and designated school personnel trained to handle any diabetic emergencies. The bill specifically required nonpublic schools to comply with several guidelines in formulating those policies and, arguably, provide for paid nurses in certain situations. We petitioned for amendments to the bill which would allow your school to maintain its autonomy. ***Ultimately, the bill was passed absolving our nonpublic schools of any requirements.***

**Immunization:** There was one piece of proposed legislation dealing with immunization that was ***ultimately withdrawn.***

**Next Generation Scholars Program:** Baltimore City and the seven other counties with at least 50% FARMs-eligible students will be awarded \$5 million annually from FY2018 (next school year) until FY 2023 for scholarship distribution under the Guaranteed Access Grant Program, providing college tuition scholarships for low-income kids at or below 130% of the federal poverty level (in other words, those eligible for *free* lunches). Low-income students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, as well as eligible 9<sup>th</sup> graders for the first two years of the program authorization, would be required to sign agreements promising to maintain a certain GPA and remain drug-free and out of legal and administrative problems, among other things, in exchange for the promise of a college tuition scholarship at a Maryland public college upon graduation from high school under the Maryland Guaranteed Access Grant Program. Next Generation recipients will have access to programs and services such as help formulating high school and college graduation plans, summer internships, financial literacy assistance, career interest assessments, mentoring/counseling and college campus visits.

So long as they meet the income requirements, both public and nonpublic school students are eligible to participate in this Program. Therefore, nonpublic school students in qualifying jurisdictions are eligible to apply. ***This program does not go into effect until next school year and, therefore, MSDE is still formulating the procedures. We will plan to advise you when applications are available.***