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**BILL:** HB 548--Career and Technology Education - Training in Soft Business Skills

**POSITION:** SUPPORT

**COMMITTEE:** Ways & Means – February 14, 2020

The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) is a statewide youth development organization dedicated to increasing the quantity and quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities for all of Maryland's school age youth. MOST is one of 50 statewide afterschool networks made possible by the generous support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and local matching investment.

The role of Career and Technology Education is to prepare learners for the careers of their choice. increasingly afterschool and summer program are playing important roles in building career awareness and engagement, providing STEM experiences, and in some cases providing work based learning, certification and dual enrollment experiences to complement work in the traditional classroom. According to the American Institutes of Research's Report Ready for Work? How Afterschool Programs Can Support Employability through Social and Emotional Learning (2015) – a growing body of research is starting to show that afterschool programs are also prime settings in which to implement social and emotional learning programs and practices, which, in turn, contribute to the development of employability skills. One example is CodeWorks, conducted in partnership between Code in the Schools and University of Baltimore (UB). High School students participate in a five week summer coding boot camp getting paid to learn to code in addition to one hour of college credit. While coding is the content focus, Code in the Schools and UB partner to intentionally focus on 21<sup>st</sup> skills as well, offering student opportunities to connect face to face with professionals in the field, and to speak and present on their work.

Employability skills, also called 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, “soft skills”, or essential skills, should be critical and intentional components and career and college readiness in both formal and informal learning settings. In 2013, Google utilizing their hiring, firing, and promotion data accumulated since the company's incorporation concluded that, among the eight most important qualities of Google's top employees, STEM expertise comes in dead last. The seven top characteristics of success at Google are: being a good coach; communicating and listening well; possessing insights into others (including others different values and points of view); having empathy toward and being supportive of one's colleagues; being a good critical thinker and problem solver; and being able to make connections across complex ideas. (Washington Post, 12/20/17).

Unfortunately, we often value technical skills over 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and lack explicit frameworks and activities that will help our technical student develop both the content knowledge and work readiness. House Bill 548 calls for Career and Technology Education to intentionally incorporate and allow for opportunities to practice employability skills. When implemented, HB 548 will increase the overall success rate for CTE students outside of the classroom experience and HB 548 will complement Maryland's Maryland Career and Technical Education (CTE) Four Year State (Perkins V) Plan.

We urge the House Ways and Means Committee to provide a favorable report for House Bill 548--Career and Technology Education - Training in Soft Business Skills.

Sincerely,

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