

May 27, 2022

The Honorable Bill Ferguson
President of the Maryland Senate
H-107 State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker of the House of Delegates
H-101 State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Mr. President and Madam Speaker:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have vetoed House Bill 1163 and Senate Bill 362 – *Primary and Secondary Education – Virtual Education – Requirements*.

This bill threatens the closure of valuable education programs currently underway, such as the Blended Virtual Program (BVP) that was developed by the Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium (ESMEC) as an alternative for students unable to return to in-person learning. In its first year, this program boasts a 75% passage rate. It received positive feedback from parents, with 77% of parents wanting their children to continue in the program next year. As the former chairman of the National Governors Association (NGA), I strongly support public-private partnerships that involve the government working with private business to expand our ability to educate our students. Nationally, there are 35 States that allow statewide open enrollment into virtual schools and our very own Blueprint for Maryland's Future encourages innovative programs such as this.

Giving the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) discretion to shut down underperforming schools as currently drafted in this bill gives too much influence to political whims, instead of putting learning at the forefront. I believe that every parent and child should have the option to choose the best learning opportunity that works for their circumstances and abilities. This bill will erode that choice by limiting the types of providers local school systems can partner with to deliver a full-time education program.

I am confident that MSDE will continue working with local school systems to develop and set best-in-class standards, and will continue to monitor ongoing virtual

programs to ensure the success of students, and, based on developing best practices and metrics, make recommendations regarding the effectiveness of virtual programs.

For these reasons, I have vetoed House Bill 1163 and Senate Bill 362.

Sincerely,

Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor