



HB724 EDUCATION - PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS - VIRTUAL LEARNING PROGRAMS

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB724 Education - Public Charter Schools - Virtual Learning Programs**. This bill expands the definition of a public charter school to include a virtual learning program that requires students to meet attendance requirements and any other requirements imposed by the local school system applicable to a location outside a school building that are necessary for the delivery of a virtual learning program as specified. Accordingly, the bill exempts virtual learning programs from certain provisions of public charter school law regarding physical presence in the school. A “virtual learning program” of instruction provides a significant portion of its curriculum and instruction to its students by teachers in an interactive learning environment through the Internet or other electronic means.

This proposed legislation would authorize a virtual charter school to exist and operate outside of the district in which it serves students. AACPS believes that charter schools should be established in response to an unmet need or unmet resources a school system cannot provide. Charter school operators should collaborate with the school system, in a strategic manner, to ensure alignment with school district initiatives for additional school choice for students and parents.

Additionally, AACPS currently offers all high school students virtual learning enhancement opportunities through MSDE’s Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunity and via other MSDE-approved vendor courses. Students can earn high school credits studying virtually from inside our high schools. Moreover, if a student wishes to earn a high school diploma virtually, this can be accomplished through Home Instruction where the student may choose from two MSDE-approved virtual schools that have been approved to teach and issue high school diplomas in the State of Maryland.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB718.