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House Ways and Means Committee

HB1355— Primary and Secondary Education – Repeating Previous Grade Level – Authorization
(Education Recovery Act of 2021)

March 16, 2021

Position: Support

The Arc Maryland supports House Bill 1355, which will provide at-risk students with the option of repeating the coursework/grade level they were in during the pandemic school year of 2020-2021. While there are other options available to parents, this could be one option exercised by families in the most severe cases: where a student was unable to access education during this unprecedented time.

We have heard from parents who have children that could not sit still long enough for virtual instruction, or who closed the computer repeatedly as they did not understand where their teacher's voice was coming from. While there are students with disabilities who suffered during this time, there are other students at risk who were unable to access virtual instruction due to lack of adult assistance, or who suffered from mood dysregulation, isolation and loneliness; who couldn't muster the will to connect to virtual school programs. Some students in internet deserts did not have device connectivity/internet service to access virtual learning.

Many of these children could be benefited by this option, to repeat the grade in cases where the impact of the pandemic most severely impacting learning.

Respectfully submitted,
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