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State Superintendent of Schools

BILL: House Bill 1376 **DATE:** March 17, 2021

SUBJECT: Primary and Secondary Education **COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means
- Virtual Education –
Requirements

POSITION: Information Only

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EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information for consideration regarding **House Bill 1376, Primary and Secondary Education - Virtual Education - Requirements**. MSDE is dedicated to supporting the expansion of high-quality virtual and hybrid programs that prepare students for college and careers. However, HB 1376 mandates the expansion of computer and internet infrastructure and other significant and costly changes, for which there is no funding provided, including the establishment of permanent and temporary State virtual programs.

During the March 10, 2021 Board of Public Works meeting, a new robust learning management system (LMS) was approved for the State. This LMS will be used to house all MSDE online student and educator statewide courses as well as support local school systems (LSSs) as they expand their virtual blended learning efforts. For example, there are fifteen student courses, five educator courses, and six educator modules under development to be housed on this LMS and to be offered in addition to the 350 online student and educator courses that are currently available.

In addition, HB 1376 establishes a “Flip the Classroom Pilot Program” with no identified funding mechanism. The concept of a “flipped classroom” was already being implemented across the State prior to the disruption of in-person instruction as a result of COVID-19 and has continued to grow since the beginning of the pandemic. The further expansion of this instructional delivery mode will incur significant software, hardware, and professional learning costs.

HB 1376 requires teacher education programs to include technology training. Maryland Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) are already required to incorporate technology standards. All EPPs have either adopted or are in the process of adopting the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Educators to meet this requirement.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB1376**. For further information, please contact Zachary Hands, at 410-767-0504, or Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov.