

February 12th, 2021

HB 824 – Public Schools – Cyber Safety Guide and Training Course – Development, Implementation, and Reporting

Honorable Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington and Members of the Committee:

I am happy to introduce House Bill 824 – Public Schools – Cyber Safety Guide and Training Course – Development, Implementation, and Reporting. This bill would require the State Department of Education, along with the Behavioral Health Administration, the Maryland Center for School Safety, and the Department of Information Technology to jointly develop and publish a cyber safety guide and training course. This course would contain information and guidance on safe Internet, social media, and technology usage for students, parents, and employees in public schools.

As a result of the COVID19 pandemic and the increased use of laptops in public schools, students have been spending an inordinate amount of time on their computers and phones. Subsequently, it is vital that we create a resource that would allow for the prevention and management of topics such as cyberbullying, hate speech, and sexually explicit content. All of which are both intrinsically linked to internet use and have been shown to be detrimental to students mental and physical health. This resource would also fill the need of educating students on how to identify these topics and how to avoid them.

Parents and teachers need resources to help them effectively guide them and their students through the challenges and issues present through the modern internet. With students stuck at home and unable to attend in person lessons these resources are needed now more than ever. This bill would create that resource.

Thank you for your time and consideration of HB 824.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pat Young, 44B