**Mohammed Choudhury**
State Superintendent of Schools

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **BILL:** | Senate Bill 318 | **DATE:** | February 9, 2022 |
| **SUBJECT:** | More Opportunities for Career-Focused Students Act of 2022 | **COMMITTEE:** | Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs |
| **POSITION:** | Support with Amendments | | |
| **CONTACTS:** | Ary Amerikaner<br>410-767-0090<br>ary.amerikaner@maryland.gov | | |

**EXPLANATION:**

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully supports with amendments **Senate Bill 318 – More Opportunities for Career-Focused Act of 2022**, which requires county boards of education that use college and career readiness software to consider the pursuit of a vocational certificate, an industry certification, or an apprenticeship program equivalent to pursuing postsecondary education. The Bill requires county boards that pay for exams, like the SAT, to pay for apprenticeship entrance exams and industry certification exams for students.

MSDE is strongly supportive of ensuring that the costs associated apprenticeship and industry certification entrance exams are covered for all students, not just those that have met the college and career ready standard by the end of 10th grade, and the Department believes that this policy direction is consistent with the intent of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and the exploration of postsecondary pathways for students.

The Department requests that the committee consider clarification on the section of SB 318 which provides the opportunity for parents and families to opt out of having a student's information provided to employers and apprenticeship sponsors. It is unclear if this implies that districts must ensure the platforms automatically distribute information to these partners.

MSDE is dedicated to ensuring that students have equitable opportunities to participate in industry credential exams and are aware of available employment and skills training opportunities as the Department works with CTE partners to establish the pathways intended within the Blueprint.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate SB 318. Please contact Ary Amerikaner, at 410-767-0090, or ary.amerikander@maryland.gov, for any additional information.