



It is also helpful to employ a meaningful process for selecting students who are likely to succeed with virtual learning. Finally, virtual schools must - like all public schools - be held accountable for student outcomes; in order to meaningfully include virtual schools in the State's accountability system, virtual schools should be developed and implemented by grade band.

With those concepts in mind and with support for the narrowly tailored goals identified in this bill, MSDE requests that the committee consider the following suggested amendments:

1. Add language enabling MSDE to establish requirements regarding the amount of necessary synchronous instruction for students enrolled in virtual school;
2. Add clarification that the school will be treated as its own school with its own school accountability code for purposes of reporting and monitoring in the accountability system;
3. Add language allowing MSDE to revoke a local school system's ability to operate a virtual school if in the previous school year the school falls within the bottom 10% in terms of performance under the state accountability system.
4. On page 3, lines 2-4, add language that allows districts to, by showing just cause to the Department, establish one virtual school per grade band (elementary, middle, high) as opposed to one school total regardless of grade band;
5. On page 3, lines 18-20, add "with the approval of the Department, local school systems may allow a local school system to exceed the 10% cap by demonstrating just cause."
6. On page 4, remove lines 23-24, as it could create unnecessary confusion with the definition of a virtual school on page 2 which references a majority of instruction provided to students via the Internet in a virtual or remote setting;
7. On page 4, lines 16-17, add "regardless of existing regulations, participation in organized athletics and on athletic teams at the student's (non-virtual) zoned public school" following the "extracurricular" line.

MSDE will continue to vigorously monitor ongoing virtual programs throughout the State to ensure the success of students, and based on developing best practices and metrics make recommendations regarding the effectiveness of virtual programs.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **Senate Bill 362**. Please contact Ary Amerikaner, at 410-767-0090, or [ary.amerikaner@maryland.gov](mailto:ary.amerikaner@maryland.gov), for any additional information.