



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 15, 2022

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chairman Washington, and Members of the Committee:

Right now, Boards of Education across the State and the Maryland State Board of Education report for meetings in-person. HB 599 will simply codify for the Harford County Board of Education (County Board) what is already understood to be the requirement: board of education public meetings should be held in-person. This will bring the County Board in line with the Harford County Council meeting procedures to-date.

HB 599 provides the following exceptions to the in-person requirement:

1. On the day the public meeting is scheduled, school personnel in the County are not required to report to work in-person; and
2. The Governor or County Executive has declared a State of Emergency that limits the size of indoor gatherings.

After speaking with constituents across the spectrum, to include parents, teachers, faculty, and staff, they almost unanimously feel that if they must report to school in-person, the County Board should do in kind.

Furthermore, HB 599 does not limit the County Board's ability to allow virtual testimony, which provides access to everyone in making their voice heard during the public meetings.

There are two friendly amendments to HB 599, which are as follows:

1. To make HB 599 a Harford County Delegation bill; and
2. That if a credible threat as determined by local law enforcement exists and local law enforcement advises against meeting in-person, the County Board may meet virtually.

HB 599 is cross-filed in the Senate and received unanimous, bi-partisan support from the Harford County Delegation.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Griffith", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Mike Griffith
District 35B, Harford and Cecil Counties