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Operations Committee

Government Operations and
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Ways and Means Committee

HB 985 Primary and Secondary Education – Virtual Schools - Alterations

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

SUPPORT

WHAT DOES THIS BILL DO?

This bill would authorize the State Department of Education, a county board of education, or a public institution of higher education to establish a statewide virtual school in the State. A student who is eligible for enrollment in a public school in the State may enroll in any virtual public school established in Maryland.

WHAT PROBLEM ARE WE TRYING TO SOLVE?

We learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, that education is changing, and new technologies and innovations have the potential to create enriched learning experiences. While many students and teachers were happy to return to in-person learning, there are still some students and families **who thrived and would prefer to continue in this mode**. Given the chance they would opt to continue with virtual learning as their children performed better academically online.

Online learning will continue to improve and create innovative learning platforms and resources. Instructional designers go beyond simply creating teaching materials. They carefully consider how students learn and what materials and methods will most effectively help individuals achieve their academic goals. The teachers, staff and administrators are trained to deliver education online. The ability to reach students in a remote environment effectively through on-line learning is exceptional. The possibilities for special needs students are also impressive.

Online and virtual learning are here to stay. Companies like Pearson Education, located in Columbia, Maryland offers full-time virtual learning programs. HB 985 will enable Maryland public schools to use the expertise of Pearson or other education companies to deliver quality online education.

Please vote in favor of HB 985