



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: HB 1237

TITLE: State Department of Education - Task Force to Study the Maryland Online Special Education System

DATE: March 27, 2024

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports HB 1237 with amendments.**

This bill establishes the Task Force to Study the Maryland Online Special Education System and provides for membership of the task force. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must staff the task force, which must study the system that includes both the Maryland Online Individualized Education Program (MOIEP; IEP) and the Maryland Online Individualized Family Service Plan (MOIFSP; IFSP). The task force must (1) study the effectiveness, functionality, and usability of the Maryland Online Special Education System; (2) determine the availability of other platforms and how other platforms compare to the current system in terms of effectiveness, functionality, usability, and cost; (3) evaluate the costs of maintaining or upgrading the current system or purchasing or leasing another platform; and (4) make recommendations to maintain and upgrade the system or replace the system with another platform as determined by the task force.

PSSAM supports any initiatives to alleviate the paperwork for special educators. The increasing burdens of this administrative work is one of the top reasons cited by special teachers for moving to general education classrooms or leaving the profession altogether.

According to MSDE, the State Superintendent is committed to addressing the concerns in this bill via an existing IEP User/Workgroup that meets quarterly to obtain stakeholder feedback on the Maryland Online IEP System and the IEP document form and format. Many of the current participants are the same stakeholders that are identified in this bill, and more.

PSSAM is aware of this group and this Superintendent's commitment to moving the work forward. Therefore, we ask that the Committee amend the bill to remove the creation of a new Task Force but retain the report required by the Department.

For these reasons, PSSAM requests a **favorable with amendments** report for HB 1237.