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BILL: HB 583
TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education - Virtual Schools - Alterations
DATE: February 12, 2025
POSITION: Oppose
COMMITTEE: House Ways and Means 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, **opposes** House Bill 583.

This bill requires each county board of education to establish a virtual school and provide a certain standard for the criteria for enrollment in a virtual school established by the State Department of Education or a county board, providing that a certain outreach campaign can be conducted equitably. A county board that determines that it is unable to offer a virtual school on its own is encouraged to collaborate with one or more other county boards to jointly establish a virtual school. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

PSSAM recognizes that since the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual schools have become a more relevant part of public education, providing, in some cases, an appropriate alternative to in-person schooling. PSSAM's opposition to this bill is not a judgment of the merits of virtual schooling, but rather opposition to statutorily mandating each county board of education to establish a virtual school.

On behalf of local superintendents, PSSAM has a longstanding policy of opposing efforts by the General Assembly to impose statewide fiscal, curricular, or programming mandates. We strongly believe that this role belongs solely to local boards of education in conjunction with MSDE. PSSAM remains committed to focusing on empowering local decision-making to ensure that education policies are relevant, flexible, and reflective of the unique needs of each community.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 583 and kindly requests an **unfavorable** committee report.