

Favorable HB583
House Ways and Means Committee

From:

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Esteemed Members,

In Frederick County, families were fortunate to have a Remote Virtual Program (RVP) serving grades 3-8. On May 15, 2024, the Frederick County Public Schools' (FCPS) Board of Education (BOE), without any knowledge, background, or programmatic review, had no compunction voting to eliminate the education of over 300 RVP students. Some BOE members whimsically decided the best course of action was to simply have FCPS Administration chaotically create a reintegration "plan," with a turnaround of less than two weeks to place RVP students back into brick and mortar classrooms.

Students and families strongly advocated for the reinstatement of RVP. On June 12, 2024, the FCPS BOE begrudgingly voted to reinstate the RVP for grades 6-8 for one year. As of February 12, 2025, RVP does not have a permanent place in the district's budget.

Speaking from personal experience, my daughter is currently a 6th grade FCPS RVP student in the general education environment with an IEP. She has diagnoses of autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and severe anxiety. Within the last two years she was diagnosed with PTSD due to witnessing daily school violence; as well as personally experiencing bullying, harassment, and classroom distractions from her education. By her 5th grade year she emotionally spiraled and missed almost 3 months of school due to school avoidance. The RVP was a miracle and a lifeline to her education. Virtual learning might not be the best fit for every student, but traditional in-person schooling isn't the right fit for all students either.

The belief that in 2025 virtual education is the same pandemic-era education is **false**.

Virtual synchronous education provides the **same** high-quality educational experiences as traditional schools. Just like in physical classrooms, teachers are certified, the curriculum meets state and national standards, promotes academic growth, critical thinking, and social-emotional development. Please support HB 583.

Thank you for your time.