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**TO:** Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

**BILL:** House Bill (HB) 0531: Public Schools STEM and Robotics Program Task Force - Establishment

**DATE:** April 07, 2026

**POSITION:** Letter of Information

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The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) are providing information regarding House Bill 531 - *Public Schools STEM and Robotics Program Task Force – Establishment*, which requires MSDE to study existing extracurricular STEM and robotics programming in the State, the operational and fiscal resources needed to run these programs, and the feasibility and practicality of implementing competitive, statewide STEM and robotics programs, including consideration of designating competitive robotics as a varsity sport in all public high schools. The final study and report with recommendations regarding statewide competitive STEM programming is due on January 1, 2027.

The Department currently administers the Maryland Robotics Grant Program, which distributes approximately \$350,000 annually to expand access to robotics education across the State, and maintains multi-year subgrantee and programmatic data. This existing data may help shed light on some of the proposed topics of study. Existing funding supports 30 grantees, including 11 local education agencies (LEAs) and 4 non-profit organizations, and reaches over 30 high schools, 12 middle schools, and 45 elementary schools.

The study required in HB 531 will involve significant data analysis, external research, and stakeholder engagement to produce meaningful recommendations at the State and LEA level. Given the current timeline and without additional resources, MSDE may face challenges in fully meeting these expectations. Additional funding or extended time would help ensure that the study produces recommendations that are both practical and reflective of statewide priorities and local needs.

MSDE and LEAs continue to prioritize providing robust and varied extracurricular programming to Maryland students across the STEM disciplines, including computer science, engineering, environmental science, and chemistry, among others. MSDE recognizes that a statewide analysis of STEM and robotics programs may provide valuable insight into program access, best practices, and opportunities for growth, and that expanding programs would allow more students to engage in STEM. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at [Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov](mailto:Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov).