



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Good afternoon Chari Kaiser, Vice Chari Washington, and honorable members of the Ways and Means Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to present **HB914: Education – Home and Hospital Teaching Program for Students – Report** to study the Home and Hospital Teaching Program for Students. This bill would create a group to study the Home and Hospital Teaching Program here in Maryland and determine if enough is being done to reintegrate students back into traditional schools.

The goals of this bill, which passed the House in 2019, are 5 fold: (1) to require the Maryland State Department of Education to assess whether students in the Home and Hospital Teaching Program are receiving adequate support and instructional time to successfully transition back to the classroom; (2) MSDE would also analyze whether local school systems have sufficient staffing to coordinate instructional services for students; (3) study whether transition plans for students returning to the classroom should be implemented, and, if so, the viability of having school counselors lead and develop those plans; (4) assess whether any transition plans should be reviewed or evaluated by a licensed medical professional prior to implementation; and (5) make recommendations regarding any statutory or regulatory changes to the Home and Hospital Teaching Program for Students.

The Home and Hospital Program is an educational service for students who have medical, physical, and/or disciplinary challenges. When students are experiencing physical or emotional conditions that make it impossible for them to attend school, this program lets them continue their education.

However, the program must be improved. As it exists now, it does not prepare student for reintegration into a classroom learning environment, especially in the cases presented by students whose behavioral or emotional condition makes it difficult for them to attend school. These students remain out of school for excessive periods of time, and often when they do return to a classroom, the school is not prepared with an adequate re-entry plan. This is not just traumatic for the students, but traumatic for everyone around them.

This bill I am sponsoring is an initial step to help rectify these re-entry problems. We need to see exactly where the program struggles so that we may address those difficulties as efficiently and mindfully as possible in the future.

Thank you for your consideration, and I respectfully request a favorable report on **HB914**.