



Board of Education of Howard County  
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,  
Ways and Means Committee  
March 3, 2022

Board of Education  
of Howard County

**HB0805: UNFAVORABLE**  
**Primary and Secondary Education - Virtual Schools – Alterations**

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The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **HB0805 Primary and Secondary Education – Virtual Schools – Alterations** for its imposition on virtual learning opportunities at the local county level.

HB0805 alters the current authority extended to local county boards to develop virtual schools, with the approval of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), by changing the definition of virtual schools. Under the amended definition, virtual schools are those operating statewide and established by MSDE, a county board, or an institution of higher education. Funding for a virtual school would be on a per-pupil basis and such schools, while still subject to state and federal laws governing the operations of a public school, are exempted from existing state policies and regulations including school year length, attendance, class size, curriculum, staffing ratios, professional development and textbooks. Students would be allowed to enroll in any established virtual school regardless of physical address, but a virtual school can enroll no more than 1% of school aged children from each county in Maryland.

This bill is aimed at providing colleges and universities the opportunity to be virtual public school education providers, as has been seen in other states such as this [Arizona State University Prep Digital](#) program. However, as written, HB0805 has the potential to impact local virtual schools given the definition changes outlined above, particularly in the limitations on enrollment. A shift in the law as described may inhibit the Digital Education Center or shift enrollment opportunities away from locally funded programs.

For these reasons, we urge a UNFAVORABLE report of HB0805 from this Committee.