

RE: Senate Bill 0362 – Primary and Secondary Virtual Schools - OPPOSE

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The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

I am writing in regard to Senate Bill 0362. My son, Sean Ewing, is a 7th grade Student in Worcester County. He is a student in the ESMEC Blended Virtual Program, and his local school of record is Stephen Decatur Middle School. Sean was diagnosed with a chronic illness in November of 2019. He struggled to make it through a full day of school and was on the Home and Hospital program. This was obviously not ideal for Sean or his teachers because he missed so much time in class. He had an extremely difficult time completing his assignments and it took an emotional toll on him as well, not being able to do the same things as other children his age. When we were informed by our school system that a virtual opportunity would be available for the 2021-22 school year, we immediately expressed our interest in the program.

The Blended Virtual Program has allowed Sean to regain so much of what he had lost the year before. It is a very challenging program, but he has wonderful teachers who explain the material in a straightforward, enthusiastic manner and provide opportunities for one-on-one meetings if there is ever anything he is having trouble with. There are also study halls and tutoring options available when necessary. Sean also meets every week with his Student Success Coordinator, Ms. Chan. She provides support if there is anything he is struggling with, gives helpful advice on study habits and achieving his goals, and most importantly checks on his well-being and talks with him about what is important to him. This is one of his favorite times during the school week.

Obviously, virtual learning is not for everyone, but for our family it has been invaluable. It has allowed Sean to be a successful student once again and the chance to focus on his health. It has been such a positive experience for him, and he wants to be able to continue with the Blended Virtual Program. Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Ewing