



everychild.onevoice.®

5 Central Avenue
Glen Burnie, MD 21061
Phone: (410) 760-6221
(800) 707-7972
Fax: (410) 760-6344
www.mdpta.org

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland Senate
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
For the Hearing on
High School Credit Clarification Act of 2018
(SB 205)
January 31, 2018**

SUPPORT

Maryland PTA represents thousands of volunteer members and families in 900 public schools. For nearly 103 years, our mission has been to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. Maryland PTA is comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's oldest and largest child advocacy organization, Maryland PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education.

Maryland PTA submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 205 – High School Credit Clarification Act of 2018. This bill requires a local board of education to award high school credit to a middle school student for online courses approved by Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for high school credit. Specifically, these online courses fall under the under the Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities Program.

As referenced in the bill, section 7-1002 of the Maryland Education Article, the Maryland State Department of Education offers Maryland virtual learning opportunities. This form of education via distant learning is a very creative and resourceful way to educate Maryland school children. Maryland PTA recognizes that teaching online offers students learning opportunities that they may not have had otherwise and provides them with the flexibility to address their educational needs. Thus, extending high school credit to work performed at the middle school level is rational and exceptional especially for students who can do the work.

Maryland PTA recognizes that Senate Bill 205 is consistent with other curricular practices that extend high school credit to middle school students. An example that is very common involves world language classes where students who perform well in middle school progress to the next level and obtain high school credit. In order for students to earn high school credit in middle school, the school must provide the same course as in high school, including the use of the same curriculum and high school instructional resources, and use the same high school exam. Accordingly, Maryland PTA believes that this bill provides equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of race, gender, national origin, language, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

While most students will earn credits in classes during the regular school day, there are several other ways to earn credits including: summer school, evening school, online courses, tutoring, work-study, job entry training, college courses, independent study/internship, and credit through examination. Maryland PTA believes that no one educational program is best for all children and that schools and parents should work together to address the different ways in which children learn. And while Maryland PTA supports bringing into alignment high school credit for middle school students that successfully take courses approved within the Virtual Learning Opportunities Program, Maryland PTA will continue to advocate for appropriate laws, policies, and regulations to ensure the safety of children and youth when using the Internet and wireless and other electronic communications.

It is for these reasons above that Maryland PTA encourages your vote to SUPPORT Senate Bill 205.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

Latisha Corey

Latisha Corey, President
Maryland Parent Teacher Association
president@mdpta.org