

**Education Committee**  
**JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

**Bill No.:** HB-5337

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS.

**Vote Date:** 3/14/2018

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/8/2018

**File No.:** 127

***Disclaimer:** The following Joint Favorable Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

**SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Education Committee

**REASONS FOR BILL:**

HB 5337 requires State Department of Education to conduct a feasibility study on the use and expansion of virtual learning and distance learning. The study must include, but is not be limited to, an examination of (1) existing virtual learning centers and distance learning opportunities, (2) the courses and programs offered by virtual learning centers or distance learning opportunities, and whether the content of the courses and programs are rigorous and aligned with SDE-approved curriculum guidelines, (3) how many school districts are implementing virtual learning or distance learning, and (4) school district capabilities to implement virtual learning or distance learning. SDE must report to the Education Committee **no later than January 1, 2019.**

Effective Date: July 1, 2018

**Substitute Language:**

The substitute language for HB 5337 specifies that SDE will conduct the study within available appropriations.

**RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

None expressed

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **House Republican Office:**

The House Republican Office testified in support of HB 5337. They thanked the Education Committee for raising an important House Republican proposal. They wish to ensure schools are using the best techniques to help students broaden their learning capabilities through technology. The Office concluded many districts have the infrastructure to support virtual learning, and HB 5337 would help virtual learning grow and become a strong component of schools.

### **Judy Goldberg, Vice President of Government Relations for the Connecticut Parent Teacher Association (PTA):**

Judy Goldberg testified on behalf of the Connecticut Parent Teacher Association (CT-PTA) and the over 38,000 members in support of HB 5337. The CT PTA looks forward to the results of the study, as virtual technology is worthy of analysis. Goldberg concludes the study may enhance the state's traditional classrooms.

### **Karissa L. Niehoff, Executive Director, The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS):**

Karissa Niehoff testified on behalf of The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) in support of HB 5337. Niehoff asserted the study is important to identify the best programs and practices to help students succeed beyond traditional school offerings. She also hopes the study will be a "clearinghouse" or exposure of virtual learning programs that are lesser quality and do not align with Connecticut standards.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed

## **ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY:**

None expressed

**Reported by: Kacey Lee Klein**

**Date: April 4, 2018**