

**PRESS RELEASE MAY 23, 2012  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NEWS MEDIA CONTACT**

SUSAN FIREY, Director of Media Relations  
Phone: 240.686.3510, Email: [sfirey@mdpolicy.org](mailto:sfirey@mdpolicy.org)

## **Online Learning in Maryland Fails to Make the Grade**

*Despite advances in technology and proliferation of online education options, state lags behind*

ROCKVILLE, MD — The Maryland Public Policy Institute today released a study examining the state's legislative foot-dragging in the creation of virtual learning opportunities. In "Online Learning Lessons for Maryland," Maryland Public Policy Institute visiting fellow Lindsey Burke writes of the state's restrictive online learning environment, and offers policy examples — culled from success stories around the country — that Maryland should emulate to bolster its own program.

While Burke points to — and lauds — online programs such as Maryland's Virtual School, and district programs scattered throughout the state, she notes that, for the most part, the state's online learning landscape remains barren. This, she writes, "despite the many tangible benefits digital learning and hybrid schooling provide for students."

Throughout the country, states are bolstering their virtual education programs, through district online learning programs, blended or hybrid online learning, online charters, and online supplemental courses. While the nuts and bolts of these programs vary from state to state, the motivation behind them is consistent. These options exist to ensure that educational opportunities for children are not solely determined by their ZIP code. Burke calls on Maryland legislators to create similar options in the Old Line State.

"With online learning, the world becomes one big classroom," said Maryland Public Policy Institute President Christopher Summers. "The last 10 years have seen a veritable explosion of technological advances. To say that online learning is the wave of the future is to venture out onto a pretty sturdy limb. Technology rules the lives of our kids. They don't talk — they text. Confining the Facebook generation to the brick and mortar schoolhouse, with few other options, is doing them — and Maryland — a grave disservice."

###