

Secondary Schools in the 21st Century

(Adopted 2009; amended 2010)

WHEREAS, the 21st Century is challenging Maryland's 24 boards of education to continuously assess and renew efforts to create schools that are innovative and sustainable learning environments in which all students are challenged to excel at 21st Century skills in the increasingly global community of commerce and ideas; and

WHEREAS, 21st Century skills encompass core content areas including English, reading/language arts, mathematics, science, government, foreign languages, and arts; and

WHEREAS, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs are being implemented to enhance the quality of instruction in mathematics and science to prepare students for higher education and the workplace; and

WHEREAS, mathematics instruction is being enhanced through initiatives that expand the number of students taking Algebra II; and

WHEREAS, the core content areas of reading and mathematics are the subject of an ongoing movement to develop national standards for both instruction and assessments, an initiative Maryland has agreed to participate in by signing the memorandum of agreement drafted by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers; and

WHEREAS, 21st Century skills include content areas such as global, cultural, and economic awareness, technology literacy, and financial and entrepreneurial literacy, as well as life skills such as ethics, personal productivity, collaboration, and social responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the ability to use technology is essential to student success in the 21st Century and MABE has long been resolved to support state and local efforts to pursue the effective use of virtual and distance learning initiatives and other programs to maximize the effective use of technology in improving student instruction; and

WHEREAS, Maryland is a national leader in requiring all students to complete a service learning project as a graduation requirement, and is developing a state curriculum for financial literacy instruction; and

WHEREAS, schools in the 21st Century must be learning environments which integrate into the core content areas the vision for all students to appreciate the connections between the knowledge and skills being taught in school and their future successes in education, career, community, nation, and global arena; and

WHEREAS, Maryland's P-20 Leadership Council is analyzing and making policy recommendations to better align PreK-12 instruction and assessments with the knowledge and skills essential for success in higher education and the workplace; and

WHEREAS, Maryland is pursuing high school reform initiatives such as developing credit-by-examination programs for English 12 and Algebra II to allow more students to graduate in three years, while also facilitating instruction for students receiving a high school diploma in four or five years; and

WHEREAS, Maryland is pursuing more robust career technology education programs to prepare students for entry into postsecondary education, apprenticeships and careers, with priority given to expanding programs that support critical infrastructure needs such as construction, health and biosciences, manufacturing, information technology, and consumer services; particularly those vital to industries related to Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); and

WHEREAS, Maryland is pursuing the expanded application of universal design for learning (UDL) principles in classroom instruction to facilitate educators' abilities to customize teaching for individual student learning differences, including how students gather facts through recognition networks, plan and perform tasks through strategic networks, and are engaged and motivated through affective networks;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) affirms and promotes the integral role of local boards of education in building and sustaining schools in which all students can receive the vision, knowledge, and life skills essential for success in the 21st Century, and educating all students to be career and college ready upon graduation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, MABE will advocate, and assist local boards in their advocacy efforts, for local, state, and federal government resources, as well as resources provided by the business community and institutions of higher education, to build and sustain 21st Century schools throughout Maryland; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE will advocate that secondary school initiatives be developed and implemented through partnerships with other public and private entities in a manner that recognizes the primary role and responsibility of local boards of education to govern Maryland's 24 local school systems through the adoption of local policies and programs.