



MABE Calls for Two Year Delay in High Stakes Testing

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ANNAPOLIS, MD – On October 1, 2014, local board members gathered at the Annual Business Meeting of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) and adopted major revisions to MABE’s Continuing Resolutions, including a call for a two-year delay in administering the High School Assessments (HSAs) in English and Algebra as “high stakes” graduation requirement tests.

Today, Maryland is poised to mandate as “high stakes” graduation requirements, two new tests in the spring of 2015, in Algebra I and English 10. The implementation plan adopted by the State Board of Education is to give the tests in the spring of 2015, set the cut scores in the summer of 2015, and allow students to retake each HSA at least once. MABE does not believe this plan is reasonable or satisfies a standard of fundamental fairness for students.

MABE does not oppose administering the new HSAs, but strongly opposes linking student scores on these new tests to high school graduation.

This scenario is strikingly parallel to that of teachers and principals who successfully opposed being evaluated based on never before seen student tests. The General Assembly agreed in 2014 to grant a two-year hiatus to educators, and MABE believes that the same standard of care and due diligence should be afforded to students.

Therefore, MABE has adopted a new policy statement in its Curriculum and Assessments Resolution, as follows:

“Be it resolved, that MABE supports the administration of a set of high school assessments as graduation requirements, which includes the HSAs and new PARCC assessments, following at least two years of administration, and the development of cut scores, a composite score, and appropriate interventions and alternatives. This timeframe is consistent with the prohibition enacted in 2014 on using PARCC assessment results to evaluate teachers and principals until the 2016-2017 school year.”

MABE’s Continuing Resolutions provide the foundation for legislative and policy positions in the coming year.

Background

Maryland adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010, and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has more recently adopted the Maryland College- and Career-Ready Standards and curricular framework, and agreed to give new state assessments developed in conjunction with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Federal education law requires three HSAs in Mathematics, English, and Science, and to comply, Maryland administers HSAs in Algebra, English, and Biology. These three tests are used to measure school and school system performance. In addition, Maryland lawmakers agreed to require a fourth HSA in Government. Although

three of the four HSAs are federally mandated, using them as high school graduation requirements is not. Only since 2009 has Maryland required students to achieve a composite score on the four tests in order to receive their high school diploma. MABE raised concerns with the proposed launch of the HSA program in the early 2000's, and ultimately MSDE agreed to phase-in implementation and develop alternatives.

[MABE's 2014 Resolution on Curriculum and Assessments](#)

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Founded in 1957, the Maryland Association of Boards of Education is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to serving and supporting boards of education in Maryland. MABE is a leading advocate for public education in the state. All 24 Maryland boards of education are members of MABE.

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