

Curriculum and Assessments

(Adopted 2013; amended 2014)

WHEREAS, in creating the State Board and local boards of education the General Assembly has delegated the responsibility for the development of curriculum and student assessments; and

WHEREAS, the State Board establishes state standards and graduation requirements; and local boards implement locally-developed curriculum to ensure that standards are met and students are prepared to meet graduation requirements; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has considered and at times enacted legislation usurping State Board and local board authority by mandating public school curriculum and student assessments; and

WHEREAS, the State Board adopted the Visionary Panel for Better Schools report in 2002, including the development of a voluntary statewide curriculum, with which local curriculum must be aligned; and

WHEREAS, in 2009 the State Board amended its regulations to clarify that the requirement to align local curriculum with the state curriculum was no longer voluntary; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding established local board authority over curriculum and assessments, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) mandated an array of new student assessments and curriculum reforms, requiring the investment of significant state and local government resources; and

WHEREAS, Maryland complied with NCLB by adopting the Maryland School Assessments (MSAs) in reading, mathematics, and science in grades 3 through 8, and grade 10; and

WHEREAS, the State Board adopted regulations in 2004 to tie graduation and receipt of the Maryland High School Diploma beginning in 2009 to passage of four High School Assessments (HSAs) in Algebra/Data Analysis, English II, Government, and Biology; and

WHEREAS, the HSAs in English II, Algebra, and Biology serve as the NCLB mandated tests at the high school level; and

WHEREAS, in 2008 the State Board approved the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation which allows students not passing one or more HSAs to complete projects for credit toward the minimum score required to receive a diploma; and

WHEREAS, in 2011 the Government HSA was abolished as a cost saving measure; and was restored by legislation enacted in 2012 which also mandates a middle school assessment in social studies; and

WHEREAS, Maryland and other states are developing, piloting, and implementing new state curriculum, student assessments, and teacher and principal evaluation systems based on the

Common Core State Standards; an unprecedented nationwide education reform initiative that will continue to test the boundaries of local, state, and federal decision-making in the education arena; and

WHEREAS, MSDE has adopted new Maryland College- and Career-Ready Standards, curricular framework, and uniform state assessments developed in conjunction with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC); and

WHEREAS, the high school PARCC assessments in Mathematics and English/Language Arts will become the High School Assessments (HSAs) for federal accountability and Maryland high school graduation requirement purposes; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 legislation was enacted to require MSDE to develop a plan to transfer from the Maryland High School Assessments in English and Algebra/Data Analysis to the comparable PARCC assessments as a graduation requirement; and

WHEREAS, the high school PARCC assessments in algebra/data analysis and English 10, to be administered for the first time in the spring of 2015, are to be “high stakes” tests which combined with the assessments in Biology and Government determine whether a student receives a Maryland Diploma;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that MABE supports local decision-making authority in developing curriculum and assessments, in conjunction with the State Board of Education, as these entities are charged with the responsibility to research, investigate, and evaluate curriculum and assessments, and are ultimately accountable for student performance; and

BE IT FURTHER 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; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE opposes efforts by the General Assembly or federal government to usurp local board authority over public school curriculum or student assessments.