

BILL: House Bill 72
TITLE: Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention
Program - Development and Implementation
POSITION: OPPOSE
DATE: February 4, 2016
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 72, which would require the State Board of Education to develop and implement a program of age-appropriate education on sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention, to be taught by teachers in accordance with a new training program.

Local boards know the importance of providing high quality training for staff regarding sexual abuse and assault awareness and response, and therefore appreciate the intent of this bill. Safety in public schools, including the safety of students who are victims of abuse, is extremely important to local boards of education. Local boards view safety as being of critical importance both in terms of the protection of students and staff, as well as a necessary element for a safe and healthy school environment conducive to teaching and learning. MABE believes that safety in public schools is the joint responsibility of local boards of education, school administrators and staff, students, parents and guardians, law enforcement and other public safety agencies, human services agencies, and the community in general.

However, MABE believes that in creating the State Board and local boards of education the General Assembly has appropriately delegated the responsibility for the development of curriculum and student instructional programming, as well as professional development programming for teachers and other school employees. The State Board establishes state standards; local boards implement locally-developed curriculum to ensure that state standards are met and students are prepared; and uniform state standards hold school systems accountable to provide professional development and training. In this way, state and local boards and educators collaborate to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable for their work.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 72.