

BILL: House Bill 654
TITLE: Education - Statewide Kindergarten Assessment - Completion
POSITION: SUPPORT
DATE: February 14, 2017
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's local boards of education, supports House Bill 654.

This bill would extend from October 1 to October 10 the date by which the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) must be completed when a local board of education or a principal and teacher who are in mutual agreement decide to assess all students entering kindergarten in a school year.

Legislation passed in 2016 to restrict the use of the KRA in response to complaints about the tests design, implementation, and utility. The law now generally limits the administration of the KRA to a sample of kindergarten students from within each local school system as determined by MSDE.

However, a school psychologist or other school-based professional may administer a statewide kindergarten assessment to a prekindergarten student if the results are intended to be used to identify a student's disability. The law also authorizes a local board of education, or principal and teacher who mutually agree, to administer a statewide kindergarten assessment if it is completed by October 1 and the aggregate results are returned within 45 days.

On August 31, 2016 Governor Hogan signed an Executive Order mandating a post-Labor Day start for all of Maryland's public schools beginning in 2017. However, when the KRA legislation passed in 2016, almost all school systems began the school year prior to Labor Day, and KRA deadline of October 1 was premised on this fact. In this context, the extension of the deadline from October 1 to October 10 is much needed.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 654.