

**BILL:** House Bill 1248  
**TITLE:** Public Schools - Compulsory School Attendance - GED Program or Alternative Educational Program  
**DATE:** February 23, 2018  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means Committee  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, opposes House Bill 1248.

House Bill 1248 would expand the list of circumstances which make a student eligible to withdraw from school to include the intent to attend a general educational development (GED) program or alternative educational program. MABE appreciates the intent of this bill to avoid the labeling of students in these situations as dropouts. However, the bill as introduced does not specify how or when the student's intent to enter either the GED or alternative program. These processes need clarification in order to ensure actual transitions from school enrollment to other educational options.

By contrast, MABE is supporting other legislation in the 2018 session which would benefit students striving to gain English language proficiency and earn a high school diploma by providing certain students the option to remain in school while studying for the GED. Several school systems are already participating in the GED Option Program and recognize the benefit of GED preparation for participating students. MABE is supporting the GED Option Program bill as needed to codify the ability for certain students to remain in high school while participating in a program to prepare them for success on the GED. The GED test is a well-recognized high school diploma equivalency examination, and a gateway to higher education and admission to professional certification and licensure programs.

Again, HB 1248 is intended to address the needs of students and the school system to appropriately recognize the educational options choices available to students and the desire to avoid labeling a student as a dropout if the student is on track towards either the GED or alternative program. However, the bill does not adequately define the process for ensuring the student is in fact on track.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 1248.