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BILL: House Bill 1311
TITLE: Education - Individual Reading Improvement Plans - Requirement
DATE: March 2, 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 twenty-four local boards of education, opposes House Bill 1311.

MABE recognizes the bill's intention to address concerns regarding the assessments used to determine individual student reading proficiency and school system response to students struggling to achieve reading proficiency by the end of third grade. However, MABE opposes this bill's proposal to mandate the development of individual reading improvement plans and prohibition on grade promotion to fourth grade based on reading proficiency. MABE opposes this bill because it does not provide an appropriate balance of local accountability and local discretion to achieve state goals for student learning through locally developed reading instruction programs and strategies.

Local boards generally oppose efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum, courses of instruction, assessments, or graduation requirements, firmly believing that this role belongs to local boards of education in conjunction with the State Board of Education. Exceptions to this rule are rare. In creating the State Board and local boards of education, the General Assembly has delegated to them the responsibility for guiding and delivering a high quality statewide system of public education through state standards and accountability measures, and locally governed and administered curriculum, teaching, and learning.

Again, MABE opposes the overall approach of this legislation to set forth the method of statewide reading assessment, method of individual reading plans, and statewide restrictions on grade promotion policies.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 1311.