

BILL: House Bill 193
TITLE: High School Diploma by Examination – Eligibility Requirements – Exemption
DATE: February 13, 2018
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Economic Matters 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 193.

MABE supports this bill because it will 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 GEP Option Program and recognize the benefit of GED preparation for participating students.

Importantly, this bill is 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. House Bill 193 would create an exception from the general rule that a student must be at least 18 years of age and withdrawn from school enrollment prior to being eligible to take the GED. The bill is narrowly crafted to provide this option for a small portion of the students who are defined as English Learners, in order to benefit those students who have experienced an interruption in learning and who have a lower level of English proficiency.

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. House Bill 193 will contribute to the prospects for Maryland youth to embark on a lifetime of learning – and earning – that will benefit themselves and the entire state.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 193.