

BILL: House Bill 281
TITLE: Education - Computer Science - Curriculum and Professional Development
(Securing the Future: Computer Science Education for All)
DATE: February 8, 2018
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS
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 281 with amendments to ensure that local school systems have the flexibility to implement expanded access to computer science instruction based on available resources and qualified teachers.

MABE certainly appreciates this bill's bold initiative to promote high quality computer science content standards and instruction in all Maryland schools. Similarly, the proposal to create a state level Center for Computing Education in the University of Maryland could provide valuable leadership and services relating to high quality professional development aligned with the state's content standards. MABE also appreciates the bill's focus on establishing the computing education and professional development fund in the State Budget to support the work of local school systems.

MABE supports local decision-making authority in developing curriculum, assessments, and instructional programs in conjunction with the State Board of Education; and that instructional programs be adopted in accordance with local board priorities and available resources. Therefore, local boards of education oppose the proposed mandate that all local school systems provide computer science instruction in all high schools. By contrast, MABE appreciates the more flexible provision to require local school systems to make efforts to incorporate computer science in each public elementary and middle school. Amendments could convert the high school mandate to a goal, and require state funding plans aligned with enabling school systems to reach this goal.

Local boards are charged with providing an excellent education for all students, including students who require additional services, and complying with myriad state and federal mandates. Maryland is deeply engaged in education funding reform through the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. The adequacy study completed in 2016 recommends a nearly \$2 billion increase in state aid, representing the commitment Maryland must make to fully and equitably fund a high quality public education for all of Maryland's more than 870,000 students. This detailed funding study did not anticipate, and therefore does not include, the costs of implementing a mandated statewide computer science program as proposed in this bill.

Again, MABE supports the passage of House Bill 281 and requests amendments to convert the bill's high school mandate into a goal, and to establish state funding targets aligned with fulfilling these goals based on the availability of sufficient state and local funding. For these reasons, MABE requests the consideration of a favorable report on House Bill 281 with the amendments described above.