

BILL: House Bill 823
TITLE: Education - Public School Teachers - Preparation
DATE: February 22, 2018
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS
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, supports House Bill 823, but requests an amendment to remove the proposed addition in state law of a definition of “supervising teacher”.

MABE supports the thrust of this legislation to promote the Teacher Academy of Maryland (TAM) program as a career and technology education (CTE) program for students. MABE believes this program is already widely available and yet would benefit from bill’s provisions to enhance value of this program for students. In addition, MABE supports the bill’s proposal to have the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) develop a digital recruitment platform, using a combination of online resources and social media, aimed at encouraging Marylanders to enter the teaching profession.

However, MABE opposes the inclusion in this bill of a new definition of “supervising teacher” in the student teacher section of existing law. MABE strongly objects to the precedent of defining a job classification in statute. There are nearly 400 instances of the term “teacher” in the education article, with numerous references to teachers, classroom teachers, and certificated teachers, but not the type of detailed job description proposed in this bill. In this context, MABE supports retaining the current law governing student teaching programs, including a clear reference to supervising teachers, but without the prescriptive definition and criteria for this position being included in the law.

Specifically, MABE requests an amendment to strike beginning with line 29 on page 2 through line 4 on page 3.

Importantly, MABE does not believe this provision relates to the primary purpose of the bill, and its removal will in no way impede the implementation of the TAM program. The bill’s primary purpose is to codify and more formally establish the TAM program in order to ensure statewide opportunities for students to access a career and technology education program designed to prepare students for a career in the education profession. By contrast, Section 6-107 of the Education Article is instead related to the professional student teaching programs in local school systems.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 823, with the amendment described above.