

BILL: Senate Bill 205
TITLE: High School Credit Clarification Act of 2018
DATE: January 31, 2018
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs 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 Senate Bill 205.

MABE appreciates the bill's intent to facilitate the ability of middle school students to receive high school credit for courses offered online. However, the bill would require, rather than allow, school systems do so; without recognizing the appropriate role of local school system policy.

MABE opposes any efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum and instructional matters, firmly believing that this role belongs to local boards of education in conjunction with the State Board. Therefore, MABE's opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of the virtual learning opportunities available to middle school students; and how a local school system decides to award high school credit for middle school students taking these approved courses. Rather, MABE opposes the proposal to impose the state policy that all school systems award full credit for any of these courses taken by middle school students.

In creating the State Board and local boards of education, the General Assembly has delegated to them the responsibility for curriculum and assessments. The State Board establishes State standards and statewide graduation requirements; the local boards implement locally-developed curriculum to ensure that students are prepared to meet the state and local graduation requirements. State and local assessment programs ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable for their work. In this context, MABE continues to support local decision-making authority in developing policies and practices on the type of course credit issue raised by this legislation.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 205.