

**BILL:** Senate Bill 300  
**TITLE:** Achieving Computer Science Collaborations for Employing Students Statewide (ACCESS) Act of 2018  
**DATE:** February 7, 2018  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS  
**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, supports Senate Bill 300 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. However, the bill's funding proposal would focus on the center itself, and not on providing the critically important resources to local school systems to implement the bill's mandated schedule of phasing in universal computer science instruction in kindergarten through twelfth grade. It is for this reason that MABE requests amendments to convert these mandates into goals, and to establish state funding targets aligned with fulfilling these goals based on the availability of sufficient state and local funding.

For example, the bill proposes that MSDE adopt computer science content standards, consider standards for professional development for teachers and other educators, and develop a plan for implementing the standards. MABE proposes that this plan include a detailed fiscal impact statement and budget analysis in order to develop the prospective budget requests for content development, professional development, and implementing the standards and strategies. In this way, the bill would ensure the costing out of implementing the instructional program, targeting underserved populations, recruiting and compensating qualified teachers and other professionals to provide the instruction, and the costs of providing instruction in each of the three grade bands. Based on this information, future state budgets could be formulated to provide state grants to support not only professional development activities, as proposed in the bill, but also the desired outcome of expanded access to computer science education across the state.

To be clear, MABE opposes the proposed mandates that local school systems provide computer science instruction in all high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools. 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. Amendments could convert these mandates to goals, and require state funding plans aligned with enabling school systems to reach them.

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.

For these reasons, MABE requests the consideration of a favorable report on Senate Bill 300 with the amendments described above.

