

BILL: Senate Bill 949
TITLE: Career Education Policy Act
DATE: February 28, 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 949.

MABE is supporting multiple bills this session to promote career and technology education and apprenticeship programs. For example, MABE is supporting Senate Bill 515 to establish a new Career and Technology Education Grant Program to provide matching grants to local boards of education for the capital equipping of school facilities used to provide a CTE program; and authorizes the Governor to include up to \$2 million for the grant program. In addition, this bill would mandate an annual appropriation of \$3 million the state budget for the Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship.

MABE is supporting Senate Bill 517 and the proposal to establish a grant program in the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation to provide grants to apprenticeship sponsors to create degree apprenticeships in workforce shortage employment categories, including: construction management; child care management; information technology; and nursing. In addition, this bill would establish a matching grant program for local governments to create apprenticeships for hard-to-fill local government jobs.

MABE is also supporting the CTE grant program included in the Kirwan Commission bill, Senate Bill 1092. This grant program would provide funds to local school systems to develop and implement a CTE curriculum framework that is innovative and includes best practices that are used by the best CTE programs around the world. To be eligible for a grant, a local board would be required to form a partnership with a community college and an industry partner in developing an innovative CTE program.

However, MABE is opposing bills relating to CTE which include provisions to substantially remove or weaken local board and school system discretion and decision-making authority over curriculum, instruction, assessments, or graduation requirements. Specifically, MABE is opposing Senate Bill 949 based on the following provisions:

- Senate Bill 949 would prohibit a school system from requiring a student to take a technology education course as a graduation requirement if the student has taken a CTE course.
- Senate Bill 949 would prohibit a local school system from directing a charter school or contract school on how technology education credits may be counted toward graduation.
- Senate Bill 949 would mandate that if a school system pays for a student to take an Advanced Placement (AP) exam, a Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), or a Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), the local board shall pay for a student to take an industrial certification exam or apprenticeship entrance exam. MABE is not opposed to the merits of these respective exams, but affirms that a local school system should retain the right to select exams for school system payment.
- Senate Bill 949 would impose a mandate on the administration of software used by school systems to administer postsecondary information processing and counseling by mandating the equivalency of the pursuit of a vocational certificate, industry certification, or apprenticeship program with the pursuit of postsecondary education. Again, MABE's position is grounded in supporting the local school system's decision-making role in deciding how to structure and administer career counseling programs for high school students.

MABE is supporting multiple bills this session to promote career and technology education, and notes the new context in which CTE is being addressed in Maryland. State law now requires statewide career and technical education (CTE) goals developed by the State Board of Education, in consultation with DLLR and the Governor's Workforce Development Board. Goals must be set for each year from 2018 through 2024 so that by January 1, 2025, 45% of high school students successfully complete a CTE program, earn industry-recognized occupational or skill credentials, or complete a registered youth or other apprenticeship before graduating high school. This bold statewide goal is conceptually aligned with federal education reforms; and will require significant state investments to achieve.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and Maryland State ESSA Plan, prominently feature a strong emphasis on Career and Technology Education (CTE) and apprenticeship programs. Maryland's statewide accountability system provides "credit for completion of a well-rounded curriculum" for those students who, among other criteria, have:

- completed a youth or other apprenticeship training program approved by the Maryland Apprenticeship Training Council;
- completed an industry certification aligned with an MSDE-approved CTE program and achieved CTE concentrator level status or higher; or
- completed an MSDE-approved Career and Technology Education program.

As Maryland strives to expand CTE and apprenticeship programs, it is imperative that federal funding continues to provide a substantial amount of the funding for these programs. Therefore, MABE is advocating for the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. As envisioned by Every Student Succeeds Act, the new Perkins CTE Act should cultivate aligned and innovative academic and credentialing programs designed to advance 21st Century skills and should help school systems offer practical training through apprenticeships, expand dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities, hire and retain skilled CTE educators, and develop classrooms designed and equipped to deliver high quality CTE instruction.

MABE looks forward to the success of a number of CTE and apprenticeship related bills in 2018. However, MABE opposes Senate Bill 949 based on the provisions of the bill which would remove local board and school system discretion in a number of key areas.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 949.