

BILL: Senate Bill 544
TITLE: Education - No-Zero Grading Policy - Prohibition
DATE: February 13, 2019
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 544, because it would directly interfere with the policy making responsibility of local boards of Education regarding student grading policies.

MABE generally opposes bills mandating a specific subject for curriculum and instruction, and therefore raises concerns about this bill's legislative intrusion into the responsibility and authority of the local school system to develop local curriculum in the context of state standards adopted under the authority of the State Board of Education. In this context, MABE has no position on the merits of the adoption by a local board of a no-zero grading policy. MABE recognizes that such policies have been adopted for many years in Maryland, and affirms that local boards should retain the authority to adopt grading policies which they believe are in the best interests of students.

There have been frequent attempts by the General Assembly in recent years to mandate public school curriculum, and policies regarding student assessments and high school graduation requirements. MABE generally opposes these efforts in light of the local and state board of education role and responsibility to develop school system policy. MABE supports collaboration between legislators and school systems regarding proposed policy changes on behalf of students, and yet MABE strongly believes that specific policy matters such as student grading policies must be deliberated, decided, and implemented by local boards of education and school administrators.

For these reasons, MABE requests that the committee issue an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 544.