BILL: House Bill 1206
TITLE: Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center - Data Matching
DATE: March 7, 2019
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 1206.

This bill would establish a framework for two data transfer protocols related to the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center research as follows: (1) the geocoding of public school students' home addresses to the census tract and block level by each local school system, as specified; and (2) the matching of specified student information to tax information by the Comptroller. MABE opposes this bill's specific mandate that each local school system convert each student's home address and geological information into census tract and block number information in the manner and format developed by the MLDS Center.

MABE supported establishing the Maryland Longitudinal System and their ongoing work analyzing individual-level student data from all levels of education through transition into the workforce. MABE agrees that in order to provide Maryland educators with the data needed to improve student achievement, we need more than a series of one-time snapshots of student performance. Therefore we believe that the intent of the Longitudinal Data System is a laudable one; to collect high-quality data about how individual students perform over time, from kindergarten through 12th grade and into postsecondary education, and to utilize this data in instructionally meaningful and beneficial ways.

Maryland's local boards of education recognize the importance of developing and utilizing not only student assessments but also other pertinent information to inform and enhance the quality of student instruction and benefit individual student outcomes. Maryland's school systems are recognized as among the national leaders in the field of data-driven decision making to better inform board decisions as school districts grapple with how to think systemically and strategically about reaching their student achievement goals.

However, Local school systems have serious concerns about the breadth and scope of the unfunded mandate associated with complying with the new student data reporting requirements. MABE believes that local school systems are already required to transfer a sufficient amount of information relating to student-level and transcript-level data as well as workforce data to MLDS under current law.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 1206.