BILL: **House Bill 1211**
TITLE: **Education - Foreign Language Requirement - Computer Programming Language Courses**
POSITION: **OPPOSE**
DATE: **March 8, 2019**
COMMITTEE: **Ways and Means 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 House Bill 1211, which would authorize the substitution of the foreign language credit requirement with a course in computer programing.

MABE is a strong proponent of the value of the current graduation requirement for a credit in foreign language. Now, more than ever, it is important for our students to have a credit in foreign language to graduate from a Maryland high school. Maryland students need to be educated to be globally competitive and fully prepared to participate in the world community of commerce and ideas.

Generally, MABE opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum, courses of instruction, assessments, or graduation requirements, firmly believing that this role belongs to local boards of education in conjunction with the State Board of Education. Exceptions to this rule are rare. In creating the State Board and local boards of education, the General Assembly has delegated to them the responsibility for guiding and delivering a high quality statewide system of public education through state standards and accountability measures, and locally governed and administered curriculum, teaching, and learning.

MABE recognizes the General Assembly's strong support for computer science education, as evidenced by legislation passed just last year. In 2018, legislation was enacted to require all public high schools to offer at least one high-quality computer science course beginning in the 2021-2022 school year. MABE supported this legislation, with amendments, and greatly appreciates the initiative to establish and fund the new Maryland Center for Computing Education to support much needed computer science-related professional development. However, MABE supports both computer science and foreign language instruction and maintaining a clear distinction between the two disciplines.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 1211.