

BILL: House Bill 985
TITLE: Public High Schools – Science Credit Requirement – Computer Science and Computer Programming
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 985, which would allow high school students to satisfy all or part of their requirement to earn credits in science by completing credits in computer science or computer programming.

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.

In addition, MABE is concerned that this legislation may not be aligned with the implementation of the new Maryland Integrated Science Assessments (MISA). These statewide assessments are being administered to all students in fifth grade, eighth grade, and high school every spring. The test was first administered in the 2016-17 school year for grades 5 and 8, replacing the former Maryland School Assessment (MSA) in science. The high school MISA began as a field test in the 2017-2018 school year. MABE wants to ensure that local science curriculum and required courses for students are preparing all students for success on the MISA tests.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 985.