

BILL: Senate Bill 617
TITLE: Free College, Career Skills, and Youth Apprenticeship Act of 2019
DATE: March 6, 2019
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 617.

MABE endorses the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education’s overarching goal to develop a world class instructional system that will enable Maryland high school graduates to match students in the highest achieving countries in the world in academic attainments, equip them with the complex skills they will need to be successful in a technologically sophisticated economy, contribute to their communities, and play their roles as informed and thoughtful citizens in the world’s oldest democracy. MABE firmly believes that much progress can and should be made in this area through state and local investments in high quality programs consistent with budget-aligned strategies and plans.

Today, school systems are struggling and typically unable to meet the high demand from students and families for CTE programs. Therefore, MABE supports significantly increasing state funding to support high quality college and career readiness programs, including costs of assessments and professional certifications, professional development, student transportation, and CTE facilities and programs. MABE also supports expanding and strengthening the system of comprehensive high schools with specialized CTE programs, and specialized CTE high schools, in accordance with local school system priorities and local board governance.

MABE also recognizes the need for strong partnerships between state agencies and the private sector, and a role for the business community in establishing CTE program standards. However, MABE opposes granting governing and regulatory authority to another board or governing body in a manner that would conflict with State Board and local board governing authority.

MABE believes Maryland is already making great strides in the area Career and Technology Education (CTE). Maryland State law already requires the State Board of Education, in consultation with DLLR and the Governor’s Workforce Development Board, to develop statewide CTE goals. Specifically, 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 was a strong advocate for the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. The Perkins CTE Act should cultivate 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.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 617.

