

BILL: Senate Bill 757
TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education - Assessments - Limitation of Administration
(One Day in May Act)
DATE: March 6, 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 757.

MABE opposes this bill's proposal to limit the amount of time allotted for student assessments. Specifically, this bill would limit the amount of time that is devoted to the administration of federal, State, and locally mandated assessments to not more than one school day in May. MABE firmly believes that this bill would impose an unreasonable and arbitrary restriction on test administration.

In general, MABE advocates that any changes to requirements regarding curriculum, student assessments, or graduation requirements, should be addressed through the State Board of Education's policy-making and regulatory process. MABE believes that in creating the State Board and local boards of education the General Assembly has appropriately delegated the responsibility for the development of curriculum and student instructional programming, as well as professional development programming for teachers and other school employees.

However, Maryland's development of College and Career Readiness Standards and the corresponding assessment program has already involved an unprecedented amount of legislation. MABE certainly appreciates the General Assembly's attention to the major transitions in the State's education system in recent years. Local board members have participated on several state commissions and collaborated on program initiatives in the area of student assessments, but MABE opposes this bill's effort to set a very rigid, and short, duration of time permitted for the administration of all mandated student assessments.

MABE and local boards have been closely engaged in the development and implementation of Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards and the corresponding State assessments. Maryland adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010, and MSDE then proceeded to adopt the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards and curricular framework. At the same time, the State Board decided to transition from the Maryland School Assessments (MSAs) and High School Assessments (HSAs) to new State assessments developed in conjunction with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

The General Assembly has also been actively engaged in guiding and monitoring the transition of the State's school and student performance accountability system. In 2013, Senate Bill 740, the College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013 was enacted to establish a number of requirements regarding student assessments and courses aimed at increasing college and career readiness. More recently, in 2017 the legislature enacted legislation to set parameters for the State Board's development of the State's plan to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Again, while MABE greatly appreciates the legislature's engagement on major education policy issues, we oppose this legislation as being too intrusive into the role of local school systems, as well as the State Department of Education, in determining appropriate testing conditions for the administration of student assessments.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 757.