

BILL: Senate Bill 961
TITLE: Education - Public Schools - Instruction in Print and Cursive Handwriting
DATE: March 13, 2019
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 961.

As this committee knows, MABE generally opposes bills mandating a specific subject for curriculum and instruction, and therefore raises concerns about this bill's legislative intrusion into the responsibility and authority of the local school system to develop local curriculum in the context of state standards adopted under the authority of the State Board of Education.

There have been frequent attempts by the General Assembly in recent years to mandate public school health policy and procedures. MABE generally opposes these efforts in light of the local and state board of education role and responsibility to develop school system policy. That said, when high priority issues such the heroin/opioid epidemic or reforms to state policy regarding students with diabetes do arise, MABE has participated in developing legislation to facilitate the role of school systems in advancing state policy goals through the health curriculum. Similarly, through the State Board of Education, curricular and instructional issues such as financial literacy and environmental education have been incorporated into state standards and mandated through regulations.

Again, MABE supports collaboration between legislators and school systems regarding proposed policy changes on behalf of students, and yet MABE strongly believes that specific curriculum matters must be deliberated, decided, and implemented by local boards of education and school administrators.

For these reasons, MABE requests that the committee issue an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 961.