

TESTING AND CURRICULUM

MABE POSITIONS

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education, representing all local boards of education in Maryland:

- ✓ **Supports** local decision-making authority in developing curriculum, assessments, and instructional programs in conjunction with the State Board of Education.
- ✓ **Supports** adequate state funding to support mandated assessment programs, including federally required reading/language arts, mathematics, and science assessments, the state's high school assessment in government, and initiatives under the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- ✓ **Supports** a pause in implementing high stakes graduation requirements based on minimum cut scores on state assessments until new assessments are field tested and administered for multiple years.
- ✗ **Opposes** any efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum or testing matters inconsistent with MABE's adopted resolutions and legislative positions.

BACKGROUND

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 assessments. The State Board establishes state standards and graduation requirements; and local boards implement locally developed curriculum to ensure that state standards are met, and students are prepared to meet graduation requirements. In this way, state and local boards and educators collaborate to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable for their work.

The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) represents a comprehensive revision of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. Maryland's state accountability plan under ESSA was approved by the U.S. Department of Education on January 10, 2018 and includes the academic standards and assessment requirements adopted by the State Board of Education and aligned with the Protect Our Schools Act of 2017. Maryland will continue to administer mathematics, reading/language arts, and science assessments in grades 3 through 12. However, the set of indicators to measure academic progress, progress towards English language proficiency, and school quality/student success, are all new under ESSA.

In the 2018-2019 school year, school performance began to be reported using a 5-star rating system based on academic and nonacademic indicators, including state assessment results, credit for growth, and other measures of success such as chronic absenteeism, school climate surveys, and evidence of access to a well-rounded curriculum. In addition, ESSA requires that the lowest-performing schools be identified for comprehensive school improvement (CSI) and others for targeted school improvement (TSI), and local plans must be developed to improve teaching and learning at these schools. These reforms are ongoing and challenging, requiring new approaches to financial reporting, professional development, and parent and community engagement.

At the same time, Maryland continues to go beyond federal testing requirements by setting passing scores on four state tests in Algebra, English, Science, and Government. For many years, the cuts scores were based on Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. In the 2019-2020 school year, brand new tests will be administered in grades preK-12, including these high school level tests. Therefore, in 2019 MABE successfully supported legislation to mandate a pause in implementing high stakes graduation requirements based on minimum cut scores on state assessments until the new tests are administered for at least one year.

Based on the recommendations of a State commission, legislation passed in 2017 to require mutual agreements with teachers' unions on a limited amount of time that may be devoted to federal, State, and locally mandated assessments.

For additional information, see [MABE's Resolution on Curriculum and Assessments](#).