

BILL: House Bill 1298
TITLE: County Boards of Education - Pregnant and Parenting Students – Policies and Reports
DATE: February 26, 2020
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's boards of education, opposes House Bill 1298 to mandate separate staffing and reporting requirements specific to pregnant and parenting students.

MABE supported legislation enacted in 2017 to require that local school system student attendance policies must excuse all student absences due to pregnancy or parenting-related conditions, including absences for labor, delivery, recovery, and prenatal and postnatal medical appointments. The policy must also:

- Provide at least 10 days of excused absences for a parenting student after the birth of the student's child;
- Excuse parenting-related absences due to an illness or a medical appointment of the student's child, including up to four days of absences per school year for which the school may not require a note from a physician; and
- Excuse any absence due to a legal appointment involving the pregnant or parenting student that is related to family law proceedings, including adoption, custody, and visitation.

Local boards certainly appreciate the intent of this bill to address concerns with the accommodation of the lactation, transportation, and childcare needs of pregnant and parenting students. However, MABE opposes the approach of legislating such specific elements of service delivery, which we maintain are best suited to regulations, guidelines and local policies and procedures. In addition, MABE opposes the bill's mandate for a new staff position in each central office of each school system to fulfill these responsibilities.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 1298.