

**BILL:** Senate Bill 986  
**TITLE:** Public Schools – Agricultural Education and Grant Programs  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**DATE:** March 3, 2020  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
Budget & Taxation Committee  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 986.

MABE appreciates the bill sponsor's intent that each local school system implement an agriculture science curriculum in at least one public high school in the county or at least one career and technology education (CTE) center in the county. However, although the vast majority of school systems do so, a few school systems are not offering this specific curriculum and program. On behalf of these school systems, and all others who may at times confront legislative proposals to mandate specific curriculum or instructional programs, MABE respectfully opposes Senate Bill 986.

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. Therefore, MABE requests that decisions to adopt and implement specific programs of instruction, as proposed in this legislation, continue to be matters for local boards of education and the professional judgment of administrators and educators in each local school system.

In addition, this bill would require that the Maryland State Department of Education create a new program and staffing position dedicated to the new Agricultural Education Grant Program. MABE is supporting the passage of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (HB 1300/SB 1000), comprehensive education reform legislation which proposes to mandate an unprecedented expansion planning, reporting, and accountability requirements on local school systems and MSDE. These proposed requirements extend to staffing, instruction, curriculum, and many other facets of school system governance and administration. In this context, local boards of education are respectfully requesting that the General Assembly not adopt any additional programmatic or reporting requirements.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 986.