

## STUDENT ASSESSMENTS & 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, grading policies, and instructional programs and governing statewide laws and regulations consistent with MABE's positions.
- ✓ **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) replaced the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 with a less punitive approach. States continue to be required 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. With teacher association and MABE support the General Assembly enacted the Protect Our Schools Act to outline the State's accountability framework. 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 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 have been developed to improve teaching and learning at these schools. These reforms are ongoing, requiring new approaches to financial reporting, professional development, and parent and community engagement.

Historically, Maryland has gone beyond federal testing requirements by adopting as high school graduation requirements passing scores on a Government high school assessment and the three federally required high school level tests. For many years, the cut scores were based on Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. Brand new tests were to be administered in grades preK-12 in the 2019-2020 school year, including these high school level tests. In 2019, MABE successfully supported legislation to mandate a pause in implementing high stakes graduation requirements until the new tests are administered for at least one year. MABE continues to support holding school systems, students, and staff accountable without penalizing students by imposing graduation requirements tied to new assessments.

The COVID-19 pandemic completely disrupted the transition to new versions of the student assessments mandated by federal law; tests which Maryland also uses as high school graduation requirements. Instead, local school systems have been conducting diagnostic assessments to identify student achievement levels and gaps caused by lost learning time, and responding with targeted instruction.

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