

**BILL:** Senate Bill 654  
**TITLE:** Education - Comprehensive Health Education Program - Skin Cancer  
**DATE:** February 25, 2021  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, opposes Senate Bill 654, which would require, beginning immediately in the 2021-2022 school year, that each local board of education provide age-appropriate instruction on skin cancer as part of the comprehensive health education program.

Local boards of education are committed to providing school facilities, school meals, and programs of instruction designed to promote the physical and mental health and fitness of students and to prepare them to maintain a healthy lifestyle as adults. In this light, MABE appreciates the intent of this bill, but opposes adopting a student health instruction standard in this manner.

As this committee knows, MABE opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum, firmly believing that this role belongs to local boards of education in conjunction with the State Board. Although MABE agrees that skin cancer prevention education is a valuable component to comprehensive school health education programs, MABE maintains a strong preference for the adoption of State standards and the local discretion to achieve those standards through locally adopted curriculum and instructional tools and practices.

In creating the State Board and local boards of education, the General Assembly has delegated to them the responsibility for developing curriculum and administering assessments. The State Board establishes State standards and statewide graduation requirements; the local boards implement locally-developed curriculum to ensure that standards are met and students are prepared to meet graduation requirements. State and local assessment programs ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable for their work.

Again, MABE's opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of teaching any specified subject matter, certainly not education about skin cancer, rather the opposition to statutorily mandating the teaching of any one concept or content item.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 654.