

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 the adoption of statewide laws and regulations reflecting a commitment to local governance, professional judgment of local educators, and community engagement.
- ✓ **Supports** adequate state funding to support mandated assessment programs, including required reading/language arts, mathematics, science, government, and other tests and screenings required by law or regulations.
- ✗ **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, including adopting state laws and regulations imposing statewide high school graduation requirements based on passing scores on English, Algebra, Science, and Government assessments. For the past several years the content and platforms for administering these tests have been in flux. In response, MABE has successfully supported legislation to mandate a pause in implementing high stakes graduation requirements until any new tests are administered for at least one year. MABE continues to support holding school systems, students, and staff accountable for improvements in student learning 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 and the tests Maryland 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. MABE believes that the State's student assessment program should be conducted in a manner that reflects the professional input of local boards, superintendents, and educators toward improvements in administration and efficacy.

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