

BILL: House Bill 489
TITLE: Commission on History, Culture, and Civics in Education
DATE: February 10, 2022
POSITION: Oppose
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 489, which would establish a permanent Commission on History, Culture, and Civics in Education to advise the State Board of Education on annual changes to the State's content standards and curriculum in the subject areas of history, culture, and civics.

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. 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. MABE's opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of teaching any specified subject matter, certainly not well-rounded and inclusive History and Social Studies content standards, but rather on the association's opposition to statutorily determining curriculum standards and content in specific subject matter areas or to dictate the teaching of any one concept or content item.

MABE supports the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act, which calls for significant, comprehensive reviews and revisions of State content standards and curriculum. The Blueprint requires Maryland to establish an internationally benchmarked curriculum that enables most students to achieve "college and career ready" status by the end of grade 10 and then pursue pathways that include International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), or Cambridge diploma programs, early college, and/or a rigorous technical education leading to industry recognized credentials and high paying jobs. The scope of this work is comprehensive, requiring the development of a fully aligned instructional system including curriculum frameworks, syllabi, assessments, clear examples of standard-setting work, and formative assessments to keep students on track.

MABE requests that the General Assembly allow the process envisioned and intended by the Blueprint to be developed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in conjunction with local school systems, and to reject proposals to legislate in the policy areas of content standards and curriculum.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 489.