

BILL: House Bill 1045
TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education – Enrollment Count – Average Daily Attendance
POSITION: OPPOSE
DATE: March 9, 2022
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 1045.

MABE opposes this bill because it would unnecessarily shift from Maryland's current method of counting enrollment on September 30 of each school year to a method that would rely on the calculation of student enrollment twice during the school year. MABE strongly supports maintaining the current methodology for counting students enrolled in public schools for the purpose of determining state and local aid amounts in the following fiscal year.

The result of this bill would be to reduce the state's total obligation to fund public education, particularly in those jurisdictions with higher rates of student absenteeism. Local boards place a very high priority on regular student attendance, and implementing programs to prevent, reduce, and respond to instances of chronic absenteeism. House Bill 1045 would reduce state funding based on the rate of absenteeism, the very indicator that school systems are required to respond to with additional resources. School systems experiencing higher rates of absenteeism through the school year would be those most negatively affected by the reduced funding driven by lower enrollment counts taken later in the school year.

Similar legislation has been introduced and rejected several times over the years, presumably based largely on the negative impacts of the loss of revenue that would result from the shift to average daily attendance. Importantly, state commissions dedicated to reforming public school finance have never adopted a recommendation to shift to average daily attendance.

For these reasons, MABE urges the Committee to adopt an unfavorable report on House Bill 1045.