

BILL: Senate Bill 121
TITLE: More Opportunities for Career-Focused Students Act of 2023
DATE: January 24, 2023
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports Senate Bill 121 and the objective of assisting high school students preparing for admission to registered apprenticeship programs in the same manner we assist students preparing for admission to postsecondary institutions. In addition, this bill would ensure that school systems equitably cover the costs of student assessments across the spectrum of college and career readiness (CCR) options including costs of licensure exams and industry certifications for students engaged in career and technical education (CTE).

MABE endorses the recently enacted Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act and the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education's overarching goal to develop a world class instructional system that will enable Maryland high school graduates to match students in the highest achieving countries in the world in academic attainments, equip them with the complex skills they will need to be successful in a technologically sophisticated economy, contribute to their communities, and play their roles as informed and thoughtful citizens in the world's oldest democracy. MABE firmly believes that much progress can and should be made in this area through state and local investments in high quality programs consistent with budget-aligned strategies and plans.

Today, school systems are struggling and typically unable to meet the high demand from students and families for CTE programs. Therefore, MABE supports significantly increasing state funding to support high quality college and career readiness programs, including costs of assessments and professional certifications, professional development, student transportation, and CTE facilities and programs. MABE also supports expanding and strengthening the system of comprehensive high schools with specialized CTE programs, and specialized CTE high schools, in accordance with local school system priorities and local board governance.

As Maryland strives to expand CTE and apprenticeship programs, and ensure equitable access to students choosing these educational pathways, it is imperative that parents remain fully engaged in this process. Therefore, MABE appreciates this bill's approach of providing parents and guardians the option of whether to share their child's personal school counseling information with employers and apprenticeship programs.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 121.