

BILL: House Bill 203
TITLE: Education - Reporting Arrests of Students - Alterations
DATE: February 2, 2023
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Judiciary
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 203 which would require that the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), the State Board of Education (SBE), and the State's Attorney be notified when a student is arrested.

MABE does not believe that arrest data alone warrants the mandatory reporting proposed in this bill. The vast majority of students arrested are never charged, and the circumstances giving rise to the arrest are addressed appropriately in the school setting. MABE supports the continued development of pre- and post-arrest diversionary programs and interventions consistent with school system policies adopting restorative approaches to student behavioral issues rather than punitive disciplinary measures. In this context, MABE does not support this bill's approach to expanding the mandatory reporting of student arrests.

MABE firmly believes that safety in public schools is the joint responsibility of local boards of education, school administrators and staff, students, parents and guardians, law enforcement and other public safety agencies, human services agencies, and the community in general. Therefore, we continue to urge federal, state, and local governments to ensure adequate and equitable funding for local public school safety and security programs, alternative education programs, and the wide array of behavioral health and public safety services provided by other public and private entities.

MABE believes that this holistic approach is essential to maintaining safe schools and access to a high quality education for all of Maryland's students.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 203.