



STATEMENT

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Statement from Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) on House Bill 119

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“On behalf of our 24 member school boards throughout Maryland, the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) strongly opposes House Bill 119. Originally introduced as legislation focused on the state health curriculum, this bill recently has been dramatically amended, amounting to total state takeover of local control over all curriculum frameworks, standards, and even instructional materials.

Few issues matter more to Maryland school boards when it comes to effectively carrying out their important work than local governance. The most recent, amended version of HB 119 would effectively negate this vital, longstanding role regarding curriculum – one which has directly contributed for so many years to the strength recognized nationwide of Maryland’s public school systems.

Specifically, this bill would mandate that local school systems follow “every element of the policy and guidelines for the program of instruction” for public schools established by the State Board of Education, and mandate that “all curriculum guides, courses of study, resource materials and other teaching aids” shall be in accordance with the state policy and program of instruction adopted by the State Board. In these alarming, counterproductive and unprecedented ways, HB 119 reaches into the boardroom and the classroom, severely limiting decision making of local boards, superintendents, department chairs, and teachers in the classroom.

Of particular concern is that HB 119 would empower the State Superintendent of Schools to enforce local compliance by withholding massive amounts of state funding, in that HB 119 grants absolute authority to the State Superintendent to decide if a local school system is not following every detail of the state standards – and then withhold millions of dollars in much-needed state funding.

Education legislation must continue Maryland’s strong tradition of supporting local decision-making authority in developing curriculum, assessments, grading policies, and instructional programs, as well as the adoption of statewide laws and regulations that reflect a commitment to local governance, professional judgment of local educators, and community engagement.

HB 119 fails this vital test, and we strongly urge lawmakers to oppose HB 119 becoming law.”