

STUDENT ASSESSMENTS & CURRICULUM

MABE POSITIONS

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education, representing all local boards of education in Maryland:

- ✓ **Supports** local decision-making authority in developing curriculum, assessments, grading policies, and instructional programs and the adoption of statewide laws and regulations reflecting a commitment to local governance, professional judgment of local educators, and community engagement.
- ✓ **Supports** adequate state funding to support mandated assessment programs, including required English/language arts, mathematics, science, government, and other tests and screenings required by law or regulations.
- ✗ **Opposes** any efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum or testing matters inconsistent with MABE's adopted resolutions and legislative positions.

BACKGROUND

MABE believes that in creating the State Board and local boards of education the General Assembly has appropriately delegated the responsibility for the development of curriculum and student assessments. The State Board oversees the adoption of state assessments, instructional content standards, and graduation requirements; and local boards may adopt locally-developed priorities on curriculum, instruction and additional graduation credit requirements, and ensure that state standards are met. In this way, the State Board, local boards, superintendents, educators, and parents collaborate to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held to high standards.

In Maryland, the authority to adopt curriculum, courses of study, and the selection of textbooks resides with each local board of education and superintendent. Examples of state laws establishing curriculum are limited, including specific subject matters such as agriculture, computer science, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. State regulations contain more specific mandates to not only "provide an instructional program" in specific content areas but also to "include the content standards set forth" in the curricular frameworks. The MSDE Protocol for Developing and Revising Standards defines the state frameworks as guides for school systems as they develop local school curricula.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future law affects curriculum and assessments in several ways. The Blueprint law calls for an internationally benchmarked curriculum that enables most students to achieve college and career readiness (CCR) by the end of grade 10 and then pursue pathways that include International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), early college, and/or a rigorous career and technical education (CTE) programs. The Blueprint envisions a fully aligned instructional system including curriculum frameworks, syllabi, and assessments to keep students on track for college and career readiness based on community college entrance standards. The Blueprint also authorizes MSDE to direct school-based curricular reforms if an expert review team and MSDE determine that a school's low performance is due to curricular problems. However, the law specifies that this is a limited exception to the rule that MSDE may not require a local board to adopt the state curriculum standards and may not be construed to restrict a local board's authority to adopt curricula.

Maryland's student assessment and school system accountability system reflects federal standards under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and corresponding state law. The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires Maryland to administer uniform statewide assessments in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science in grades 3 through 12. These tests are administered by MSDE through the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP), which Maryland has historically supplemented with additional "high stakes" graduation requirements based on cut scores on high school assessments. The State Board has adopted a shift away from stand-alone high school assessments in favor of end of course (EOC) tests which may be counted as no more than 20% of a student's final grade. MABE advocates for state testing policies reflect the professional input of local boards, superintendents, and educators on improvements that equitably and efficiently inform instruction and benefit students.

For additional information, see MABE's [Resolution on Curriculum and Assessments](#).