

BILL: Senate Bill 638
TITLE: Education – Student Service Hours – Financial Literacy Course
DATE: February 23, 2024
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 638 with amendments brought forth by the sponsor to ensure that local school systems have the flexibility, rather than mandate, to implement financial literacy curriculum content based on high quality state resources.

MABE certainly appreciates this bill's bold initiative to promote financial literacy of students by authorizing local boards of education to approve financial literacy courses as qualifying for credit toward the student's 75 hours of service learning required for high school graduation. However, as this committee knows, MABE strongly supports local decision-making authority in developing curriculum, assessments, and instructional programs in conjunction with the State Board of Education; and that instructional programs be adopted in accordance with local board priorities and available resources.

Therefore, local boards of education oppose the bill's proposed mandate that all local school systems adopt a policy consistent with the bill beginning in the 2025-2026 school year.

Local boards are charged with providing an excellent education for all students, including students who require additional services, and complying with myriad state and federal mandates. Likewise, state and local superintendents and boards of education take very seriously the pleas from legislators, parents, and the business community for greater attention to instructing our students in financial literacy so that they are prepared to make sound financial decisions. Financial literacy is a wonderful example of how, and why, the education policy-making arena is the appropriate place for these decisions to be made and carried out.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 638.