

Informational Testimony regarding Senate Bill 654

Education—Comprehensive Health Education Program—
Instruction on Skin Cancer

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

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11:00 am

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Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony on Senate Bill 654, legislation that would require county boards of education to provide age-appropriate instruction on skin cancer as part of their comprehensive health education program.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA tenaciously advocates for the policies and programs that will give our students access to the resources they need in order to achieve their full potential. We understand clearly that the health and wellness of our students—both physical and behavioral—has a direct impact on their academic and nonacademic outcomes.

However, MSEA has a longstanding position in opposition to legislatively mandating curriculum and instruction. We believe that it is the purview of the MSDE and the State Board of Education to develop and implement curriculum standards in order to meet the academic needs of the students served in Maryland's public schools. It is then the responsibility of local districts to determine how best to implement a program of study that best serves the needs of their students. We strongly believe that mandating state-wide curriculum or instructional requirements—outside of very extreme circumstances—is bad public policy. We trust that our health educators, guided by both state- and

county-level mandated curriculum and the educational needs of the students in their schools and districts, are more than capable of adding instructional topic matters into their plans without a legislative mandate.