

BILL: House Bill 827
TITLE: Education - Public Schools - Instruction in Print and Cursive Handwriting
DATE: March 3, 2022
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 827, which would require local boards of education to require each public elementary school to provide handwriting instruction that enables students to develop (1) legible print handwriting by the end of the third grade and (2) legible cursive handwriting by the end of the fifth grade.

As this committee knows, MABE generally opposes bills mandating a specific subject for curriculum and instruction, and therefore raises concerns about this bill's legislative intrusion into the responsibility and authority of the local school system to develop local curriculum in the context of state standards adopted under the authority of the State Board of Education.

MABE generally opposes these efforts in light of the local and state board of education role and responsibility to develop school system policy. That said, through the State Board of Education, curricular and instructional issues such as financial literacy and environmental education have been incorporated into state standards and mandated through regulations. In addition, when high priority issues such the heroin/opioid epidemic or reforms to state policy regarding students with diabetes do arise, MABE has participated in developing legislation to facilitate the role of school systems in advancing state policy goals through the health curriculum.

Again, MABE supports collaboration between legislators and school systems regarding proposed policy changes on behalf of students, and yet MABE strongly believes that specific curriculum matters must be deliberated, decided, and implemented by local boards of education and school administrators.

For these reasons, MABE requests that the committee issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 827.