

**Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 985
Education - Public High Schools - Financial Literacy Curriculum and
Graduation Requirement**

**Ways and Means
Friday, February 25, 2022
12:00 p.m.**

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The Maryland State Education Association opposes House Bill 985, which would require the State Board of Education to develop curriculum content for a half-semester-long course in financial literacy, require every local board of education to implement the curriculum, and every student to complete the course as a requirement for graduation.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students for the 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).

Since September 2011, all local school systems have been required to offer a program of instruction in financial literacy education for students in Grades 3-12 that aligns with the Maryland Personal Financial Literacy State Curriculum. According to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Personal Financial Literacy Education report,¹ all twenty-four local school systems have financial literacy education currently incorporated into courses required to graduate. This same report notes that seven local school systems offer stand-alone financial literacy courses, completion of which is required for graduation. Finally, it is worth noting that all Prince George's County Public Schools offers a semester-long, .5 credit

¹ Available online at http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/CTE/FL_Update_Report_2019-2021.pdf (Accessed on February 23, 2022).



Financial Literacy course, which will become a graduation requirement in SY 2023-2024. The intent of this legislation related to the development of curriculum and the requirement that LEAs are incorporating said curriculum into the instructional program being provided to students is already occurring. In fact, given that said instruction is happening beginning at Grade 3, this content is being provided to our students long before high school.

MSEA has a longstanding position in opposition to legislatively mandating curriculum. We believe that it is the purview of the Maryland State Department of Education and the State Board of Education to develop and implement curriculum standards to meet the academic needs of the students served in Maryland's public schools. It is also within the State Board's purview to determine the minimum graduation requirements for Maryland's students. Local boards can establish additional requirements for graduation for students within their districts. Financial literacy standards have been created and local districts are currently responsible for incorporating this content into their students' program of study. It should be left up to local boards to determine if they believe a half-semester-long course would best serve the needs of their students. We strongly believe that decisions such as these are best left to those at the local level.

We respectfully request an unfavorable report on House Bill 985.