

BILL: House Bill 362
TITLE: More Opportunities for Career-Focused Students Act of 2022
DATE: March 3, 2022
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports House Bill 362 with amendments to address concerns with the mandate to assist students and families with the costs of not only student assessments but also industry certifications. In addition, a provision of the bill raises parental consent concerns regarding the sharing of student information with apprenticeship programs and prospective employers by default, without express parental permission.

MABE endorses the recently enacted Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act and the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education's overarching goal to develop a world class instructional system that will enable Maryland high school graduates to match students in the highest achieving countries in the world in academic attainments, equip them with the complex skills they will need to be successful in a technologically sophisticated economy, contribute to their communities, and play their roles as informed and thoughtful citizens in the world's oldest democracy. MABE firmly believes that much progress can and should be made in this area through state and local investments in high quality programs consistent with budget-aligned strategies and plans.

Today, school systems are struggling and typically unable to meet the high demand from students and families for CTE programs. Therefore, MABE supports significantly increasing state funding to support high quality college and career readiness programs, including costs of assessments and professional certifications, professional development, student transportation, and CTE facilities and programs. MABE also supports expanding and strengthening the system of comprehensive high schools with specialized CTE programs, and specialized CTE high schools, in accordance with local school system priorities and local board governance. In this context, MABE requests that the bill's mandate that school systems that pay for certain student assessments must also pay for industry certifications be amended to more generally require equitable and affordable access to student assessments the college and career readiness programs.

As Maryland strives to expand CTE and apprenticeship programs, and ensure equitable access to students choosing these educational pathways, it is imperative that parents remain fully engaged in this process. Therefore, MABE requests an amendment to provide parents and guardians the option of whether to share their child's personal school counseling information with employers and apprenticeship programs. MABE requested that on page 2 in line 9 "NOT" be replaced with "WHETHER".

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 362 with the amendments described above.