

FAVORABLE
House Bill 837
More Opportunities for Career-Focused Students Act of 2024

House Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 837, which would require certain county boards of education to consider the pursuit of career certifications or apprenticeships as the equivalent of pursuing postsecondary education and require that each public high school inform students of employment and skills training opportunities. This bill would also require a county board to pay for a student to take an apprenticeship entrance exam or industrial certification exam if the county board covers similar expenses for students taking college preparation exams.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. 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).

This bill offers common-sense steps to align county board policies with the Blueprint's goal of promoting career readiness. By ensuring that vocational entry points are treated similarly to college preparation, the provisions in this bill would help make students aware of the range of postsecondary pathways available to them. We also appreciate the requirement that a county board ensure parity in access to college preparation and career entrance exams by covering both types of fees equally across the student body.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 837.