

**BILL:** House Bill 1447  
**TITLE:** Education – Maryland STEM Program – Established  
**HEARING DATE:** March 11, 2025  
**POSITION:** UNFAVORABLE  
**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means  
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all local boards of education in the state, opposes House Bill 1447, which would establish a new state-funded program to support staffing instructional programs in nonpublic schools. MABE firmly opposes the use of public funds to financially benefit private and nonpublic schools.

House Bill 1447 would establish the Maryland STEM Program within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to provide additional compensation to public school teachers for teaching STEM courses at nonpublic schools. While MABE recognizes the shortage of STEM teachers—a challenge that public schools also face—Maryland’s constitutional mandate is to establish and fund a thorough and efficient system of free public schools. Public funds should be prioritized to meet the needs of public school students rather than to supplement instructional offerings in private schools.

This bill proposes an appropriation of \$250,000 in state funds for grants supporting STEM instruction in private schools. While the bill ensures this funding does not flow through public schools, and this year’s version of the bill no longer requires public school systems to administer the program, any taxpayer-funded educational initiatives should be directed toward public schools, not private institutions.

MABE appreciates the State’s commitment to implementing the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, including systemic reforms in prekindergarten, college and career readiness, and critical salary increases for educators. However, the financial realities of fulfilling the Blueprint’s promises are daunting. State and local funding must remain focused on increasing staffing levels and sustaining competitive wages for the many dedicated professionals—teachers, principals, counselors, nurses, custodians, and bus drivers—who serve Maryland’s public school students every day.

To be clear, MABE supports parental choice among the many educational options available in Maryland. MABE also supports public school teachers having opportunities to earn additional income, particularly when they can apply their expertise teaching. However, public funding should not extend to private schools. House Bill 1447 would divert

state funding and MSDE resources away from public education and the essential mission of Blueprint implementation.

For these reasons, MABE urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 1447.