

BILL: House Bill 1582
TITLE: Education - Program of Educational Accountability - Alterations
(Comprehensive Outcomes and Measures of Progress for Supporting Schools (COMPASS Act))
HEARING DATE: March 12, 2026
POSITION: FAVORABLE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all the state's local boards of education, **supports House Bill 1582 – Education - Program of Educational Accountability - Alterations (Comprehensive Outcomes and Measures of Progress for Supporting Schools (COMPASS Act))**.

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), states are required to establish statewide accountability systems for public schools. See ESEA § 1111(c). While certain core indicators must be included by federal law, the ESEA intentionally preserves discretion for states to determine how their accountability systems are structured and implemented, so long as the measures allow for meaningful differentiation in school performance; and are valid, reliable, comparable, and statewide (with the same indicator or indicators used for each grade span, as such term is determined by the State).

Pursuant to the ESEA, states must have both: (1) academic achievement indicators (academic achievement, another academic measure, graduation rates, the progress of English learners in achieving English language proficiency) and (2) at least one school quality or student success (SQSS) indicator. States have discretion within the Federal requirements to develop their accountability systems, but they must meet the above requirements. **House Bill 1582 makes changes to the menu of options for the Maryland State Department of Education's statewide accountability system to more accurately measure student academic achievement and school quality and success, as follows:**

- Overall, prohibits the use of teacher evaluations as a metric.
- To the academic achievement indicators:
 - Removes access to or credit for completion of a well-rounded curriculum.
 - Limits the weight that the academic indicators may receive to not more than 20% individually, and not more than 70% of the composite score, when combined.
- To the SQSS Indicator:

- Adds “school staffing measures,” including access to teachers who hold an advanced professional certificate or have obtained national board certification.
- Adds completion of well-rounded curriculum measures that are indicative of on-track progress at key transition points within elementary and secondary education.
- Permits student testing to be a component of the well-rounded curriculum SQSS indicator.

MABE overall believes these changes to better serve school systems by more accurately measuring student academic achievement and school quality and success, as provided more specifically below.

MABE Supports the Prohibition on the Use of Teacher Evaluations in the School Accountability System in HB 1582.

Teacher evaluations are rarely, if ever, used in accountability systems anywhere in the nation. Longstanding Federal guidance since the passage of ESSA has emphasized that SQSS indicators should reflect student outcomes or school conditions, not internal personnel evaluations. Although teacher evaluations are great tools for professional development, feedback and coaching, personnel decisions, and school improvement strategies, they should not be used as a metric for rating schools. In addition, because teacher evaluations are usually district-specific, not standardized statewide, ratings often differ between and among school systems, or even differ among schools in the same system, and thus may not provide for meaningful differentiation or comparable measurements. Further, the ESEA requires that indicators must support “annual meaningful differentiation” among schools, which personnel evaluations may not reliably provide. Therefore, MABE supports the prohibition on using teacher evaluation ratings as an accountability indicator.

MABE Supports the Inclusion of School Staffing Measures in the School Quality and Student Success Indicator.

Teachers and staff are central to school systems. MABE supports the inclusion of a school staffing measure as an option for the SQSS Indicator, because we believe access to effective, certified teachers is crucial for student success. Because the terminology “school staffing measure” is vague, there will be wide discretion afforded to the Maryland State Board of Education (MSBE) when developing a new accountability system, and MABE looks forward to providing feedback during that process to ensure Maryland’s accountability system is accurate, effective, and equitable.

MABE Supports Well-Rounded Curriculum as a School Quality and Student Success Indicator but has Concerns about Including Testing in the SQSS Indicator.

MABE fully supports the importance of a well-rounded curriculum and notes its importance in ensuring all students are prepared for life outside of school. However, we are concerned by HB 1582's addition of student testing into the SQSS Indicator. Student testing is already captured in the academic achievement indicators and was previously prohibited from being included in the SQSS. It is not clear from the bill text whether the addition of student testing to the SQSS Indicator would be a way around the 70% maximum weight for the academic indicators. While student test scores can be useful measures of growth, the language "access to or credit for completion of a well-rounded curriculum" was lifted from the academic indicator standard set forth in Education Article § 7-203(c)(2)(vi). Testing is very clearly an academic indicator, and not necessarily a measure of a school quality. MABE supports efforts to measure student growth but cautions its addition to the SQSS Indicator.

Conclusion

MABE supports efforts to update Maryland's school accountability system and provide additional flexibility for creating a framework that most accurately measures student academic achievement and school quality and success. We look forward to working with stakeholders, MSBE, and MSDE on designing an updated framework in response to HB 1582.

For these reasons, **MABE respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 1582.**