

**BILL:** House Bill 836  
**TITLE:** County Boards of Education – College Preparatory Programs - Fees  
**HEARING DATE:** February 25, 2026  
**POSITION:** UNFAVORABLE  
**COMMITTEE:** Ways & Means  
**CONTACT:** Sam Mathias, Legal & Policy Director ([smathias@mabe.org](mailto:smathias@mabe.org))

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State’s local boards of education, **respectfully opposes HB 836, County Boards of Education – College Preparatory Programs – Fees.**

HB 836 would prohibit local boards of education from charging a student or student’s parent or guardian any fees related to enrollment in, or completion of, Advanced Placement courses specified by the College Board.

Central to the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, local boards of education must increase student access to post-college and career readiness (CCR) pathways. The Blueprint requires that all students who meet CCR standards must have access to no-cost post-CCR pathways. Post-CCR pathways encompass a variety of programs: Career and Technical Education, International Baccalaureate Diploma programs, dual enrollment, and Advanced Placement programs. But HB 836 only prohibits local boards of education from charging all students and families for only Advanced Placement fees, which has the net effect of elevating Advanced Placement coursework above all other pathways, and significantly increasing the financial burden on school systems, without a dedicated funding stream. all while significantly increasing costs for school systems.

While MABE strongly supports increasing access to post-college and career readiness standards, this bill is contrary to the Blueprint, in that it requires local school systems to pay for one CCR pathway for every single student—not just those that meet the CCR standards. Under Education Article § 7-205.1(g), as of the 2023-2024 school year, each county board has been required to provide all students who meet the CCR standard with access to post-CCR pathways at no cost to the student or the student’s parents including the cost of any fees. And as stated in Maryland State Board of Education’s (MSBE) March 2025 College and Career Readiness Standard: Policy Document, citing Education Article § 7-205.1(e)(3)(ii), “When the Accountability and Implementation Board determines that the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future has been fully implemented, Post-CCR pathways shall be available only to students who have met the CCR standard, except under limited circumstances determined by the Board.” As such, the bill appears to undermine a key purpose of the Blueprint, to drive all students toward College & Career

Readiness standards. It is also notable that this bill would require statewide public funding for a single pathway administered by the College Board, a private nonprofit entity, rather than preserving flexibility among multiple CCR-aligned options. While the College Board plays a significant role in college readiness nationally, mandating universal payment for one specific program beyond what the Blueprint requires raises questions about why one external provider is singled out for guaranteed statewide funding.

While MABE supports increased access to post-CCR pathways, when each AP exam costs \$99, approximately 121,000 AP exams were taken by Maryland public school students in 2025, and the total exam costs for public high school students for AP exams amount to approximately \$12 million annually, it is a significant cost that will be borne by local school systems. Moreover, these numbers are likely to increase if HB 836 were to become law, which means that costs will skyrocket for school systems, without additional appropriated funds for this purpose.

For these reasons, **MABE opposes HB 836 and respectfully urges an unfavorable report.**