

BILL: House Bill 1157
TITLE: Education - Student Grades - Purposeful Misrepresentation
DATE: February 28, 2020
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's boards of education, strongly opposes House Bill 1157 to criminalize the conduct of educators and administrators in the grading of student work.

As this committee knows, MABE generally opposes bills mandating policies or procedures involving curriculum and instruction, assessments, and in this instance, grading policies. House Bill 1157 would criminalize school employee conduct that MABE believes is entirely within the purview of the local school system's administration of public schools in a manner that is in the best interests of students. This local governance and decision-making authority is also governed by the standards and procedures adopted by the State Board of Education and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Student grading and reporting policies have been governed by State regulations for many years. Most recently, the State Board in 2029 proposed radical revisions to these state regulations, including provisions limiting student access to course credits based on a very low threshold of unexcused absences. Again, MABE continues to strongly opposes such prescriptive and punitive standards as contrary to the principle that local boards should retain the authority to adopt grading policies which they believe are in the best interests of students.

For these reasons, MABE urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 1157.