

**BILL:** House Bill 950  
**TITLE:** Public Schools - Civics Education Award Program  
**DATE:** February 25, 2022  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 950, which would mandate that schools administer a civics assessment to all seniors in high school. The bill specifies that the assessment would be the civics portion of the Naturalization Test developed and administered by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Generally, MABE opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum, courses of instruction, assessments, or graduation requirements, firmly believing that this role belongs to local boards of education in conjunction with the State Board of Education. Exceptions to this rule are rare. In creating the State Board and local boards of education, the General Assembly has delegated to them the responsibility for guiding and delivering a high-quality statewide system of public education through state standards and accountability measures, and locally governed and administered curriculum, teaching, and learning.

Maryland continues to implement statewide student assessments aligned with the Common Core and Maryland's College and Career Readiness Standards through the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) tests. The pandemic presented enormous challenges to the administration of the statewide student assessment system and MABE does not support adding to the array of standardized State tests or graduation requirements at this time.

For many years, Maryland's federally mandated standardized tests were referred to as the Maryland School Assessments (MSAs), with the exception of the high school level tests in reading (English), math (Algebra), and science (Biology), which were referred to as High School Assessments (HSAs). These three HSAs served two purposes: as components of the federal accountability requirements, and as components of the state diploma requirements adopted by the State Board of Education in regulation. Under the newer MCAP program, the Algebra and English assessments are the same, and the science assessment has been transitioning to the Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA).

The fourth high school level assessment required for graduation has been in Government, and this assessment has no corresponding federal mandate. The Maryland-developed assessment in Government became a graduation requirement beginning with students entering grade 9 in 2013-2014 and continues to be administered as a graduation requirement. In this context, MABE is confident that the Government assessment will remain a rigorous and meaningful component of Maryland's high school level comprehensive assessment program.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 950.