

BILL: House Bill 160
TITLE: Elementary and Secondary Schools - Workplace Readiness Week - Establishment
DATE: January 31, 2024
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 160, which would mandate not only the recognition of Workplace Readiness Week but also mandate a detailed curriculum and instruction in public schools during that week.

Specifically, House Bill 160 would establish the third week of April as Workplace Readiness Week and require local boards of education to deliver a program of classroom instruction. Elements of the curriculum would be required to cover local, State, and federal labor laws; the history of the labor movement in the United States; apprenticeship programs in the State; and alternative non-college career paths.

MABE generally opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate curriculum, including the content standards on which curriculum is based, firmly believing that this role belongs to local boards of education in conjunction with the State Board. Therefore, MABE's opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of teaching any specified subject matter, but rather opposition to statutorily mandating revisions to content standards and curriculum.

In creating the State Board and local boards of education, the General Assembly has delegated to them the responsibility for reviewing and adopting content standards and, at the local level, reviewing and adopting curriculum. The State Board establishes State content frameworks, state assessment standards, and minimum state graduation requirements. Each local board and school system implement locally-developed curriculum to ensure that the state content frameworks are followed, student performance standards are met, and students are prepared to meet graduation requirements.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 160.