

# The e-Brief Monthly Newsletter

Published as a Member Service

November 2011



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## President's Message

I want to thank the membership of MABE for their support of my presidency for this year. As I stated in my address at the conference, I'm asking all of us to become more involved in what is happening on the State and Federal levels of government. We need to speak out on the impact that legislation is having on public education, and our inability to sustain our current levels of providing a quality education to our students without additional resources to implement the requirements of these new laws and regulations.

On a brighter side, it appears that the issues we have with the Maintenance of Effort and the possible impact it will have on our local funding will be corrected during this session of the General Assembly. Even if it is, we may still have to live with some compromises that emerge in the legislative process. We won't know, of course until a bill is drafted and passed.

The possible pass back of pension costs also seems to be on hold for this session of the General Assembly.

Again, I want to urge board members, along with their superintendents to review NSBA's positions on the various amendments to NCLB reauthorization. If necessary, take a position on any of the amendments of either not supporting it and why or amend stating how you want the law to work best for you and your students. When you finish the process, send appropriate letters to Secretary Duncan, President Obama, Maryland Congressional Delegation, Congressmen John Kline and George Miller of the U.S. House Education and Workforce Committee and Senators Tom Harkin and George Miller of the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. To ensure that we are communicating well, please also copy John Woolums at MABE, and me.

Keep up the good work you do for the children as you prepare them to be the citizens of tomorrow.

Best wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving,

*Gary Bauer*

## Special Session Recap and Regular Session Prep

Maryland's General Assembly conducted a Special Session from October 18 through October 21, 2011, in order to adopt a statewide redistricting plan for Maryland's eight Congressional districts. The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) took no position on the pending redistricting plan, but did pay very close attention to the development of the agenda, advocating against any consideration of shifting teacher retirement costs to local school systems. In addition, we used the opportunity presented by the Special Session to meet with legislators to advocate MABE's legislative priorities for the upcoming 2012 Session.

MABE kicked off the Special Session with a reminder to all legislators of MABE's top legislative priorities – most importantly the need to reform and restore Maintenance of Effort as the local funding floor. During the Special Session, we sent a [GreenSheet legislative update](#) to all MABE members, including updates on the House Ways and Means Committee briefing on Maintenance of Effort, and the bills being introduced in opposition to the proposed redistricting plan.

As expected, based on assurances from key legislators, the Special Session concluded without any proposals on other matters, such as raising the gas tax, or shifting teacher retirement costs. MABE devoted so much time and effort on this issue because following the 2011 Session, Senate President Mike Miller wrote to Governor O'Malley requesting that the Special Session agenda include the shifting of teacher retirement costs. MABE responded to President Miller and the Governor in opposition to this request, and are pleased that the issue was not raised.

Maintenance of Effort was a hot topic of conversation among legislators and the subject of a House Ways and Means Committee [briefing](#). MABE continues to partner closely with the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) and other education organizations in support of legislation to build more accountability, flexibility, fairness, predictability, and transparency into the budget process local governments use to sustain their share of public school funding from year to year.

Other highlights of the Special Session included briefings on the FY 2013 budget outlook and Governor O'Malley's Jobs and Revenue Proposal, which was described as an initiative to boost infrastructure spending in order to create jobs and complete much needed improvements on school facilities, roads and bridges, and other projects.

The [Fiscal Briefing](#) before a joint session of the Spending Affordability Committee, and Senate Budget & Taxation, House Appropriations, and House and Ways & Means Committees, provided a very detailed overview of Maryland's revenues and expenditures, and the projected FY 2013 structural deficit (ongoing revenues less operating costs) of slightly more than \$1 billion. Clearly, the lagging economy will continue to present an enormous challenge as we advocate for sustaining adequate and equitable state and local funding for public schools.

The three bills enacted during Special Session include the following:

**Congressional Districting Plan:** This law ([SB 1](#), Chapter 1, Acts of 2011 Special Session, effective October 20, 2011) establishes the composition of the eight districts in the State of Maryland for the election of members to the United States House of Representatives, specifying ward, election district, and precinct boundaries.

**Montgomery County – Board of Education Residence Districts – Redistricting Plan:** This law ([SB 2](#), Chapter 2, Acts of 2011 Special Session, effective October 20, 2011) redistricts the five

Montgomery County Board of Education districts from which five school board members are elected. The bill also repeals a requirement regarding the date when reapportioned districts become effective.

**Prince George's County School Board Redistricting:** This law ([SB 3](#), Chapter 3, Acts of 2011 Special Session, effective October 20, 2011) redistricts the nine Prince George's County Board of Education districts from which nine school board members are elected. The Prince George's County Board of Education is 1 of 18 elected school boards in Maryland, and 1 of 4 school boards for which some or all board members are elected from local school board districts

For additional information on MABE's legislative positions and priorities, contact John R. Woolums, Esq., Director of Governmental Relations, at [jwoolums@mabe.org](mailto:jwoolums@mabe.org).

## Board Appointments and Changes

Governor O'Malley makes [appointments](#) to Talbot County school board

## In the News

Already seen these news items? You must be a fan of MABE's Facebook page! If not, join us:



MABE contracted to begin Worcester County [superintendent search](#)

Schools spending likely to be a [prominent issue](#) in Annapolis

MABE conducts [candidate forum](#) in Calvert County

Maryland Association of Student Council opposes [financial literacy](#) requirement

Former MABE presidents attend [state superintendent search](#) forum

## Upcoming Workshop

**Legislative Toolkit for Board Members** - Friday, December 9, 2011 - 9:00 a.m.-noon, MABE office

More often than not, school boards are being called upon to become active participants in the legislative process. Advocacy beyond the 90-day session and the General Assembly includes building grassroots support for local school systems and keeping federal officials informed on Maryland's priorities. In this session, you'll learn how to use a variety of legislative tools to improve your effectiveness both in your community and in the state.

Complete the [registration form](#) today and fax to the MABE office: 410.841.6580, or email to Kathy Bennett, [kbennett@mabe.org](mailto:kbennett@mabe.org)

## MABE's Newest Partnership Service

MABE's newest partner, Milestone Communications, specializes in developing stealth wireless infrastructures in partnerships with local governments, generating millions of dollars annually by leasing school and park properties. Based in Reston, Virginia, Milestone has developed and managed over 40 wireless towers in the Washington, DC region and manages over 600 locations in public-private partnerships in Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun Counties in Virginia, and Frederick County, Maryland.

MABE recently hosted a Lunch and Learn session, well attended by staff from many school systems, to introduce Milestone Communication services to our members.

MABE partners with select companies, providing member districts the services that enable them to operate more efficiently, offer benefits to staff, or generate revenue. MABE Partnership Services contribute to the mission of serving and supporting Maryland boards of education.

## National School Boards Association Publications

**School Board News Today:** The Week in Blogs - What does eliminating the Dept. of Education mean?

Pundits made a big deal about Rick Perry forgetting the name of one of the three federal departments he plans to eliminate if elected president - for the record, it was the Department of Energy - but blogger Frederick M. Hess of the American Enterprise Institute is more concerned about just what the Texas governor means when he says the Department of Education would also be "gone". ([more](#))

**The Edifier:** Using research to inform policy without understanding the research

Tennessee appears to be another example of how using research to inform policymaking can backfire if policymakers do not fully understand the research. This [article](#) in the New York Times examines Tennessee's new teacher evaluation system, which is based on some good ideas but has some worrisome implementation flaws. ([more](#))

**American School Board Journal:** Is School Board Reform Coming to You?

It's time to "kill all the school boards," proposed a 2008 article in The Atlantic, which claimed that "local control has become a disaster for our schools." School boards are "a governance system that is too often ineffective, if not dysfunctional," suggested a 2009 Education Week special report. And "local control ... needs a makeover," concluded the Fordham Institute earlier this year, when it promised a three-year effort "to put governance at the center of the education-reform conversation."

What's going on here? Why are pundits and reform-minded think tanks putting school boards in their gun sights? ([more](#))

**Board Buzz:** Steve Jobs' edtech legacy

The death of Apple founder Steve Jobs has triggered an outpouring of worldwide support by individuals touched by the innovations he enabled. One reporter compared Jobs to the Thomas Edison of our generation, and indeed his vision has transformed the way we create, connect, and communicate much as Edison changed the lives of those in the past century. ([more](#))