



Apr. 5, 2013

### MABE Calendar

April 5 - Conference Planning Committee meeting  
April 8 - [Legal Services Association](#) (LSA) meeting  
April 13 - 15 - [NSBA Annual Conference](#)  
April 18 - [LSA Seminar](#): A Day in the Life of a Principal  
April 19 - [Boardsmanship Academy](#) course:  
It's Time to Go Viral: Using Social Media to Engage Stakeholders and Build Community Capital  
April 22 - Legislative Committee meeting  
April 24 - [State Board of Education](#) meeting

May 1 - Board of Directors meeting  
May 2-3 - Group Insurance Pool Retreat  
May 17 - [Boardsmanship Academy](#) course: The ABCs of IEPs  
May 21 - State Board meeting  
May 31 - [LSA Seminar](#): Annual Special Education Update

(For a complete calendar with details, please visit the [MABE website](#).)

### 2013 NSBA Conference

The National School Boards Association Conference is just around the corner. MABE officers will be in San Diego to represent Maryland at the NSBA Delegate Assembly and other events, and MABE staff will be there presenting several workshops. Kick off your conference experience by joining us for our annual reception. We look forward to seeing you!

[NSBA Conference website](#)

List of [Maryland attendees](#)

Cool tool! Try the NSBA [Conference Planner](#)

Visit [MABE Partners](#) in the Exhibit Hall:

BoardDocs: Booth 1115

BuyBoard: Booth 1147

Performance Matters:

Booth 1342

Maryland Association of Boards of Education  
invites you to a reception  
Friday, April 12  
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Start your 2013 NSBA Conference by making  
time to connect with Maryland colleagues.  
Join Us!

San Diego Marriott Marquis and Marina  
Marina Kitchen  
333 West Harbor Drive · San Diego



## Visit MABE Presenters at the NSBA Conference

### The Latest in School Law

Monday, April 15: 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Room 29CD

There is a constant onslaught of new cases and laws that may have a significant effect on you as a board member, on your school board, and on your school system. Be prepared and avoid potentially costly litigation by learning about the latest happenings in school law in an informative, fast-paced, and fun format.

Presenter: Stephen Bounds, Maryland Association of Boards of Education

### New Board Member Boot Camp Pre-Conference Session: Ethics, Board Meetings, and the Role of a School Board Member

Friday, April 12: 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM Pre-Conference Workshop

Room 25ABC

Pre-registration required. Fee is \$75.

Ethical and appropriate behavior for school board members is expected. Yet problems arise during meetings that can interfere with important work getting accomplished. Interact with your colleagues in a mock school board meeting conducted by members of the NSBA Board Member Boot Camp Faculty to examine what works and what doesn't in your meetings.

Moderator(s): Kitty Blumsack, Maryland Association of Boards of Education  
Terry McCabe, Maine School Boards Association

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*Charles W. Willis*  
Memorial Award

Honoring Outstanding School Board Service

Nominations are now open for the 35th [Charles W. Willis Memorial Award](#) for outstanding board service. Established in memory of MABE's first executive director, and limited to a single honoree each year, present or former living school board members are eligible.

Please note:

- Local school boards may nominate a current or former member of their own board, or a former or current member of any other MABE member board.
- Individuals may not make nominations.
- A board may nominate only ONE candidate.
- Candidates from previous years may be re-nominated.
- Previous recipients of the award are ineligible.
- Responses to award criteria that exceed 250 words will not be considered by the committee.
- Nominations received after the deadline will not be considered.
- All nominations are strictly confidential. Only the name of the recipient chosen by the committee will be announced.

To nominate a candidate, please visit our website for [guidelines and criteria](#).

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## **Legal Services Association (LSA) Seminars Underway**

MABE's LSA offers periodic [seminars](#) on legal issues of importance to board and staff members. Members may send an unlimited number of participants free of charge. Upcoming seminars are:

April 18, 2013, 9:00 - 12:30

A Day in the Life of a Principal

May 31, 2013, 9:00 - 12:30

Annual Special Education Update

June 6, 2013, 9:00 - 12:30

School Safety: From Columbine to Newtown

For more information about LSA, please contact Steve Bounds, Director of Policy and Legal Services, [sbounds@mabe.org](mailto:sbounds@mabe.org).

To register for an LSA seminar, please contact Kathy Bennett, [kbennett@mabe.org](mailto:kbennett@mabe.org).

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### **Upcoming [Board Development](#) Opportunities**

**Friday, April 19, 2013 - 9:00 a.m. to noon**

#### **It's Time to Go Viral: Using Social Media to Engage Stakeholders and Build Community Capital**

Many school districts have revisited the long held belief that social media is all bad and have started using Blogs, Facebook, and Twitter to better engage stakeholders. Properly leveraged, social media can be utilized to start conversations based on a solid foundation of facts rather than some blogger's rant. With Ari Ioannides, BoardDocs president, you will learn how simple changes to existing websites and board materials combined with proactive messaging can enhance any communications strategy and build community capital.

Who should attend: School Board Members, Superintendents, Board Assistants

Key work areas: Climate, Collaboration, Continuous Improvement

Location: MABE office

**Friday, May 17, 2013 - 9:00 a.m. to noon**

#### **Special Education: The ABCs of IEPs**

Join one of Maryland's best education attorneys, Rochelle Eisenberg, for an in-depth discussion of special education law and what it looks like in real life. Educating children with special needs takes time, commitment, and resources from the school system. In this session, you'll learn the basics, the law, the challenges, and issues in school systems today.

Who should attend: School Board Members, Leadership Program Participants, Superintendents

Key work areas: Vision, Standards, Alignment, Continuous Improvement

Location: MABE office

For more information, contact Kitty Blumsack, [kblumsack@mabe.org](mailto:kblumsack@mabe.org).

To register, contact Kathy Bennett, [kbennett@mabe.org](mailto:kbennett@mabe.org)

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## MABE Surveys Ongoing

As the Board of Directors begins the process of writing a new strategic plan, surveying our members is a high priority. Our first two surveys were on the topics of communication methods, professional development, and our website, and we greatly appreciate those members who responded.

**Our third and last survey, on the topics of advocacy, legal, and policy services, will be sent in a few weeks. Please take a few minutes to provide vital feedback that will enable the board to make informed decisions about serving members in the future.**

If you have not received the first and second surveys, please contact Sandi Barry, [sbarry@mabe.org](mailto:sbarry@mabe.org).

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## Current Issue of [American School Board Journal](#):

### The Last Word April 2013

#### Sequestration: What's in a Word?

As these words are being written, another fiscal cliff looms. The outcome of discussions by the President and legislative leaders is uncertain. We have been here before, more than once. The pattern now seems all too familiar: a new deadline, another cobbled fix delaying more permanent action. The public seems both frustrated and resigned at the same time, disappointed that big decisions seem so hard to make yet not surprised, either.

I have been wondering about that response and why people are not up in arms about the failure of their elected officials to do what they were sent to Washington to do. On one hand, we can ascribe some of this to the fact that people are busy and don't have the luxury of following the action in the nation's capital that closely. Political intrigue simply does not matter all that much beyond the Beltway.

Yet, I think there is more to it than that. Along the way, the language used to describe these recurring fiscal crises actually seems to have exacerbated the public's inattention. I thought about this recently in one of many meetings I have attended on the subject. Repeatedly, speakers talked about the impact sequestration would have on so many aspects of public life, most particularly on public education. It occurred to me that in this case the noun was as much the problem as are the leaders who seem unable to act. I wondered: Why are we talking about sequestration, anyway?

I am a bit old fashioned, so when I run across an intriguing word, I like to learn exactly what it means. In this case, I went to the Cambridge Dictionary, which defines sequestration as taking "temporary possession of someone's property until they have paid back the money that they owe or until they have obeyed a court order." I think I may have stared at the definition for a full minute, wondering what in the world that has to do with slashing vital federal funding for schools. Surely, no one is suggesting that school boards owe money to the federal government or have failed to comply with a judicial directive.

Why, and how, sequestration came to be used to describe automatic budget cuts remains a mystery to me, but I am convinced it is serving a very useful purpose for some people. Such a term fosters an inside-baseball aura for the discussion, adding to the lexicon of political commentators and public officials. When one group adopts its own language, others -- the general public, in this case -- effectively are left to try to interpret what is being said. No wonder so many people don't appear to be very concerned about the continuing brinksmanship in Washington. They have seen it all before and, besides, they probably don't really know what the debate is about anyway. Sprinkling sentences with "sequestration" doesn't help.

I grew up in a household that valued education, but my family would throw a proverbial flag whenever an obscure or arcane term was used when a better-known one would work just as well. "That's a 25-cent word," someone would say, and the point was made. I can only imagine the reaction if I used "sequestration" to describe budget cuts.

Some in Washington may enjoy this word game, but school boards can't afford to. We need to be clear: The pending cuts in federal aid to education will have a dramatic impact on students and will hurt most the school districts with the greatest need. We need to be blunt, and we need to be clear. We can leave "sequestration" for a game of Scrabble.

*Thomas J. Gentzel ([tgentzel@nsba.org](mailto:tgentzel@nsba.org)) is the executive director of NSBA.*



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