

January 19, 2015

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Upcoming Events

On January 20, at 1:30 p.m., MABE will brief the House [Ways and Means Committee](#) on MABE services and 2015 legislative positions and priorities.

On January 22 at 2:00 p.m. (following a briefing by State Superintendent Lillian Lowery) MABE will participate in a briefing before the [Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee](#) on the recently released Charter School Report.

On January 29 MABE will hold the [2015 Legislative Day Luncheon](#). All boards and board members are welcome and encouraged to attend this year's Legislative Day. Invited speakers include Governor Larry Hogan, House Speak Mike Busch, Senate President Mike Miller, State Superintendent Lillian Lowery, and other legislative leaders. (Invitation included at the end of this GreenSheet.)

MABE Opposes the Proposal to Adopt a Mandated Statewide Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools

As reported in the Baltimore Sun on January 14, 2015, Governor-Elect Larry Hogan is on record supporting the mandate to start the school year post-Labor Day. The Sun reports:

A movement to require Maryland public school systems to start classes after Labor Day picked up steam Thursday when it gained the support of Gov.-elect Larry Hogan. Hogan joined a news conference called by Comptroller Peter Franchot, the state's No. 1 cheerleader for a later school start, to add his name to a petition supporting the idea of turning back the clock to a time when summer vacation ended the Tuesday after the holiday. "I think this is a tremendous effort for a lot of reasons," Hogan said. "It's not just a family issue, it's an economic issue."

Legislative Committee Calendar

- Session convened Jan. 14, 2015
- **2015 Legislative Day Luncheon – January 29, 2015, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.** (Note: The Legislative Committee will meet before the Luncheon, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.)
- February 9, 2015
- March 2, 2015
- March 16, 2015
- March 30, 2015 (*not April 6!*)
- (April 13, 2015 – Sine Die)
- April 27, 2015 – Session Wrap-up

MABE's Legislative Committee meetings are held in the MABE office on Monday mornings, 10:00 to 12:00, unless otherwise indicated. Meeting agendas and materials are posted on the [MABE website](#).

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all twenty-four local boards of education in the State, opposes the adoption of a statewide prohibition on starting the school year before Labor Day.

MABE supports preserving and protecting the rights of local communities and their respective boards of education to adopt school calendars; school calendars that reflect not only state testing schedules and mandated holidays, but also other important local considerations. Local boards serve a broad constituency of professional educators, parents, students, businesses and other community groups. MABE believes that imposing a statewide start date for the school year would impose unwarranted restrictions on the prerogative of local communities to consider and decide on their local school system calendar.

According to MABE President Verjeana M. Jacobs, "Adopting a school calendar involves local considerations which are significant, affecting thousands of school employees and families. School systems annually negotiate teacher and employee contracts that reflect available resources and commitments to providing professional development and accommodating instructional planning and assessment preparation and grading. School system calendars also feature built-in flexibility to allow for adjustments resulting from inclement weather. Each school calendar also reflects local traditions and preferences regarding the length of breaks for Thanksgiving, winter holidays, religious holidays, and spring break. In this light, MABE supports preserving local discretion when it comes to deciding when to start the school year."

Jacobs continues, "While we certainly understand the need for family time or the desire for an extra week of vacation, our local school boards are concerned, first and foremost, that our teachers have adequate time to teach effectively and that our students' learning needs are met. In a student's academic career, every instructional day is critical. From our perspective, there are no "soft" days in the school calendar."

To Jacob's point, a post-Labor Day mandate this past fall would have resulted in many districts starting two weeks later than they did. Graduation-required testing or college credit testing takes place in the spring. Losing ten days at the beginning of a school year would require local school systems to find ten instructional days by the middle of their third quarter or second term. In the numerous high schools with block scheduling, that equates to twenty instructional days in terms of material covered.

MABE takes no position on whether any local board should choose to adopt a start date after Labor Day. Again, this and other policy decisions should continue to reside with each local board. Maryland's nationally recognized success in providing a high quality public education throughout the state is the direct result of the policies and priorities adopted by each of the twenty-four local boards. Maryland's local boards recognize and affirm that a basic premise of our nation's system of public education is that public schools should be governed locally. Most importantly, Maryland's twenty-four local boards have a proven record of succeeding in balancing community priorities and available resources in pursuit of the overarching goal of improving student learning.

Maryland's local boards of education oppose mandating a post-Labor Day start date because it would not adequately reflect local community considerations; considerations which local boards must always balance in favor of advancing student learning. MABE believes that if pre-Labor Day instruction is deemed by boards and educators to be in the best interests of some or all students in a local school system, Maryland's state officials should continue to respect and defer to these local decisions. For example, under a mandated post-Labor Day start date the 2015-2016 school year would not be allowed to start until Tuesday, September 8th. For most school systems this start-date would be a significant delay in their regular opening dates, and likely result in extending the school year through June of 2016.

For these reasons, MABE strongly opposes the proposal to adopt a statewide prohibition on starting the school year before Labor Day.

Budget Update & MABE Priorities

As the 2015 legislative session gets underway, the immediate state budget challenges include both balancing the FY 2015 state budget, and the Governor's balanced budget proposal for FY 2016. Regarding the first order of business, actions have already been taken, and remain to be seen, to balance the current year FY 2015 budget by June 30, 2015.

Balancing the FY 2015 State Budget

State law authorizes the Governor to reduce an appropriation by up to 25% with the approval of the Board of Public Works. Funds may be reduced under this provision only when the Governor finds an appropriation is unnecessary or when the reduction results from legislative action on the budget bill. Certain restrictions are placed on this authority. The Governor may not reduce Legislative or Judicial Branch appropriations, appropriations for payment of the principal or interest on State debt, or appropriations for public schools.

Governor O'Malley's FY 2015 Budget Actions

On July 2, 2014, in response to revenue estimates through May, the Board of Public Works adopted the Governor's proposed \$77.1 million in reductions to the FY 2015 state budget.

- On January 7, 2015, the Board of Public Works adopted the Governor's proposed reductions to help close the FY 2015 budget gap. The approved reductions included:
 - a two-percent across-the-board reduction for all state agencies (\$113 million), and reductions for higher education (\$18 million) and community colleges (\$7 million).
 - An almost \$8 million reduction to the Disparity Grant Program to fund it at the FY 2014 level;
 - A reduction of \$558,000 to Police Aid (FY 2014 level);
 - A transfer of \$11.8 million in unencumbered special fund balance for both State-side and local Program Open Space;
 - A reduction of \$5.9 million in Core Funding for local health departments to bring the funding (FY 2014 level);
 - A \$6.8 million reduction to community colleges; and
 - A \$65 million fund transfer from the Local Income Tax Reserve Fund to the General Fund to be repaid in a subsequent fiscal year as specified in the 2015 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act.

- Further reductions to close the more than \$400 million FY 2015 state budget shortfall will be proposed during the 2015 legislative session.

The FY 2016 State Budget

MABE is anxiously awaiting the Governor's proposed state budget for FY 2016, which includes more than \$6 billion for direct aid to education and teachers retirement. The following sections provide an overview of the respective roles of the Governor and General Assembly in developing and enacting the State Operating and Capital Budgets, and provide highlights of the educational funding outlook for FY 2016.

Education Funding is a Constitutional Mandate

The Maryland State Constitution places a high priority on public education by requiring the General Assembly to "establish a thorough and efficient system of free public schools" and to "provide by taxation or otherwise for their maintenance."

Governor's Budget Authority

Under the Maryland Constitution, the Governor must submit a budget to the General Assembly on the third Wednesday in January (or by the tenth day of session in the first year of a term). The budget consists of a detailed statement of revenues and intended spending and a bill making the appropriations proposed. The budget must be balanced when submitted. In other words, the proposed appropriations must be supported by estimated revenues. After submission of the budget bill, the Governor may change proposed appropriations by submitting one or more supplemental budgets.

Full State Funding for Public Education

MABE's adopted legislative positions for 2015 include 1) Support for sustaining a robust level of school funding in the FY 2016 State Budget, including the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) and an inflation factor, to support Maryland's standards-based school finance system; 2) Support for legislation to create a commission to make legislative and funding recommendations in order to update and improve Maryland's school finance system; and 3) Support for a per pupil funding allocation for prekindergarten students, including a 0.5 FTE for half-day students and 1.0 FTE for full-day students, without any off-setting reduction in compensatory education funding.

This year's budget will be developed based on last year's September 30 enrollment count. The full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of public school kindergarteners through 12th graders increases from 834,524 to 840,747 in the FY 2016 budget. The statewide total allocation of funding to local boards of education to educate these students includes the major Bridge to Excellence funding categories (foundation, compensatory, special education, and limited English proficient) and several other major items such as the student transportation, Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI), Guaranteed Tax Base Program, Net Taxable Income (NTI) grants, supplemental grants, and other programs. The following table lists the major components of state aid to education, including the baseline budget for FY 2016.

State Aid to Education FY 2014 – FY 2016

	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>	<u>Baseline FY 2016</u>	<u>\$ Change 2015-2016</u>	<u>% Change 2015-2016</u>
Public Schools					
Foundation Program	\$2,850.5	\$2,882.4	\$2,941.7	\$59.2	2.1%
Supplemental Grant	46.5	46.6	46.6	0.0	0.0%
Geographic Cost Index	130.8	132.7	135.6	2.9	2.2%
NTI Education Grants	8.3	26.9	35.1	8.3	30.7%
Foundation – Special Grants	0.0	0.6	0.0	-0.6	-100.0%
Compensatory Aid	1,196.0	1,251.7	1,315.9	64.2	5.1%
Student Transportation	254.5	258.4	265.2	6.8	2.6%
Special Education – Formula Aid	269.3	271.7	277.1	5.4	2.0%
Special Education – Nonpublic Placements	109.8	110.9	114.0	3.1	2.8%
Limited English Proficiency Grants	193.4	197.7	216.1	18.5	9.3%
Guaranteed Tax Base	52.3	59.4	51.3	-8.1	-13.6%
Aging Schools Program	8.1	6.1	6.1	0.0	0.0%
Head Start/Pre-Kindergarten	5.9	6.1	6.1	0.0	0.0%
Other Education Programs	81.1	83.2	84.5	1.2	1.5%
Subtotal Direct Aid	\$5,206.5	\$5,334.4	\$5,495.4	\$161.0	3.0%
Retirement Payments	728.1	738.6	760.0	21.4	2.9%
Total Public School Aid	\$5,934.7	\$6,072.9	\$6,255.4	\$182.4	3.0%

Source: Dept. of Legislative Services

The Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI)

GCEI is a discretionary component of the State aid formulas that provides additional funding to local school systems where educational resource costs are above the State average. Since funding for the program began in FY 2009, the State has provided funding through GCEI to 13 local school systems each year, and it has been fully funded each year since fiscal 2010. The FY 2015 budget included \$132.7 million for GCEI; and the FY 2016 budget should include \$135.6 million.

The New House of Delegates

MABE's legislative advocacy efforts are predominantly focused in the House and Senate committees in which the vast majority of education policy bills are heard (The House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee), and in which the State operating and capital budgets are deliberated (The House Appropriations Committee and Senate Budget and Taxation Committee). The following rosters are provided to assist local boards and board members in identifying returning, new, and especially local representatives on these key committees.

House Ways and Means Committee 2015 Roster		House Appropriations Committee 2015 Roster	
Full Committee	Contact	Full Committee	Contact
Hixson, Sheila E. (Chair)		McIntosh, Maggie (Chair)	
Turner, Frank S. (Vice Chair)		Proctor, James E., Jr. (Vice Chair)	
Afzali, Kathy		Barnes, Ben	
Barnes, Darryl		Beitzel, Wendell R.	
Buckel, Jason C.		Carozza, Mary Beth	
Ebersole, Eric		Chang, Mark S.	
Fennell, Diana M.		Gaines, Tawanna P.	
Hornberger, Kevin Bailey		Ghrist, Jeff	
Howard, Carolyn J. B.		Grammer, Robin L., Jr.	
Kaiser, Anne R.		Gutierrez, Ana Sol	
Long, Bob		Haynes, Keith E.	
Luedtke, Eric G.		Hettleman, Shelly	
Metzgar, Ric		Jackson, Michael A.	
Patterson, Edith J.		Jones, Adrienne A.	
Platt, Andrew		Korman, Marc	
Reilly, Teresa		Krimm, Carol L.	
Shoemaker, Haven		Lierman, Brooke Elizabeth	
Simonaire, Meagan C.		McConkey, Tony	
Tarlau, Jimmy		McKay, Mike	
Walker, Jay		Miller, Aruna	
Washington, Mary L.		Robinson, Barbara	
Washington, Alonzo T.		Serafini, Andrew A.	
		Sophocleus, Theodore	
		Vogt, David E., III	

	Young, Pat	
	Zucker, Craig J.	

The New Senate

Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee 2015 Roster		Senate Budget and Taxation Committee 2015 Roster	
Full Committee (EHEA)	Contact	Full Committee (B&T)	Contact
Conway, Joan Carter (Chair)		Kasemeyer, Edward J. (Chair)	
Pinsky, Paul G. (Vice Chair)		Madaleno, Richard S., Jr. (Vice Chair)	
Bates, Gail H.		Currie, Ulysses	
Kagan, Cheryl C.		DeGrange, James E., Sr.	
Montgomery, Karen S.		Eckardt, Adelaide C.	
Nathan-Pulliam, Shirley		Edwards, George C.	
Rosapepe, Jim		Ferguson, Bill	
Salling, Johnny Ray		Getty, Joseph M.	
Simonaire, Bryan W.		Guzzone, Guy	
Waugh, Steve		King, Nancy J.	
Young, Ronald N.		Manno, Roger P.	
		McFadden, Nathaniel J.	
		Peters, Douglas J. J.	

MABE's 2015 Priorities

MABE's top priorities for the 2015 Legislative Session include:

Support for continued governance autonomy for local boards of education to set education policy and school budgets; and opposition to unfunded mandates - MABE supports continued autonomy for all local boards to adopt education policies that promote high standards for academic and fiscal accountability. Therefore, MABE opposes any legislative or regulatory initiatives which would have the effect of reducing local board governance or budgetary authority, or which create unfunded mandates.

Support at least a two-year delay in using the new PARCC High School Assessments in English 10 and Algebra I as "high stakes" graduation requirement tests - MABE does not oppose administering the new HSAs developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), but strongly opposes linking student scores on these new tests to high school graduation for at least the next two school years in order to develop cut scores and alternative assessments.

Support for full State funding for Maryland's outstanding public schools - MABE urges the Governor and General Assembly to support increased funding of public education in the FY 2016 State Budget. Local boards of education are committed to preparing all students to be globally competitive in college and careers. Increased state investments in public education are essential in these times of rapid change, rising expectations, and increased costs.

Support for robust State funding for school construction and renovation projects - MABE places a high priority on providing students high quality, healthy, and safe learning environments. Therefore, we greatly appreciate the State's consistent investment in school construction and renovation projects. The FY 2016 school construction budget should provide at least \$350 million to ensure that all Maryland schools are better learning environments to prepare our students to be college and career ready.

Support for sustained local government investments in education - Funding from Maryland's twenty-three counties and Baltimore City plays a critical role in combining with state and federal funding to support teaching and learning. MABE strongly supports the Maintenance of Effort reforms enacted in 2012. MABE also supports sustaining adequate local capital funding essential to financing the construction and renovation of high quality school facilities in partnership with the State.

For more information on these priority issues, and MABE's legislative positions on other issues ranging from charter schools to special education, go to MABE's [Annapolis Advocacy Center](#), or directly to MABE's [2015 Legislative Positions](#) publication.

MABE Resources

General Assembly: MABE strives to be the primary voice for public education in Annapolis. The unity of 24 local school boards lends strength to our increasing importance in the legislative process, ensuring that the Governor, General Assembly, and State Board of Education turn to MABE to help determine what is best for school children.

MABE's Legislative Committee holds monthly meetings to guide the Association's lobbying activities in Annapolis, and invites policy and legislative leaders to exchange ideas. The Director of Governmental Relations, in coordination with MABE leadership, conducts direct lobbying activities including written and oral testimony before the General Assembly. MABE adopts and publishes an annual Legislative Positions publication and a Session Summary. MABE coordinates the Green Street Coalition, which is comprised of legislative liaisons from school systems and the superintendents association, and MABE staff pens the weekly GreenSheet update on legislative activity. For more information go to [MABE's Annapolis Advocacy Center](#).

State Board of Education: In addition, MABE staff and members of the Board of Directors attend each meeting of the State Board of Education, and staff pens The Monitor, which provides a comprehensive summary of each meeting. MABE frequently informs the State Board of the Association's positions on priority issues through testimony, correspondence, and meetings. For more information go to [MABE's State Board Advocacy Center](#).

Federal Government: MABE encourages all boards of education to engage in advocacy at the federal level to ensure that our federal officials are well informed on the priorities and perspectives of local school systems and the fiscal and policy issues arising under the myriad federal programs impacting public education. MABE's Federal Relations Network (FRN) Committee is comprised of board members appointed to represent the association in communicating NSBA and MABE positions to Maryland's federal delegation, including our two U.S. Senators and eight members of the U.S. House of Representatives. For more information, visit MABE's [Federal Advocacy Center](#).

MABE's Annual Legislative Day Luncheon provides a forum for legislative leaders to share their perspectives and positions on education funding and policy issues and for local board members to advocate for MABE's legislative priorities. The President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, and education and budget committee chairs and vice-chairs present remarks, share lunch, and engage local board members in lively discussions. All members of the House and Senate are invited and many attend looking for their local boards and their input on pending bills.

MABE's Annual Legislative Day Luncheon

Sponsored by Senator Adelaide C. Eckardt

Thursday Jan. 29, 2015
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Miller Senate Building, Annapolis, MD
Pre-Luncheon Meeting for Legislative Committee Members
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Convenient parking at [Navy/Marine Corps Stadium](#)
Details of scheduled speakers to follow.
For additional information please contact
Tracy Oldaker, 410.841.5414 or toldaker@mabe.org



Maryland Association of Boards of Education
Serving & Supporting Boards of Education Since 1957