

January 30, 2015

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### Legislative Committee Calendar

- Session convened Jan. 14, 2015
- February 9, 2015
- March 2, 2015
- March 16, 2015
- March 30, 2015 (*not April 6<sup>th</sup>!*)
- (April 13, 2015 – Sine Die)
- April 27, 2015 – Session Wrap-up

### MABE’s 2015 Legislative Day Luncheon

MABE’s annual Legislative Day Luncheon, held on January 29<sup>th</sup>, was a great success, thanks to the participation of House and Senate legislative leaders, and board members and superintendents from across the state, coming together to share insights and opinions on the state budget and other issues pending in Annapolis.

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](#).

This year, MABE wants to especially thank Senator Addie Eckardt for her sponsorship of the event, providing MABE the opportunity to gather and meet with legislators in the Senate’s conference center.

The standing room only audience heard from MABE President Verjeana Jacobs, MABE Legislative Committee Chair Joy Schaefer, and legislative leaders including Senate President Mike Miller, Delegate Adrienne Jones of the House Appropriations Committee, Senators Nancy King, Paul Pinsky, and Rich Madaleno, and Senate Minority Leader J.B. Jennings. Many other legislators in attendance offered brief remarks of welcome, support for public education and the work of local boards, and encouragement for continued advocacy in Annapolis.

Earlier in the week, MABE had issued a [Call to Action](#) for boards to contact their legislators, urging opposition to the more than \$144 million in education funding cuts proposed in the Governor’s state budget for the 2015-2016 school year. That [Call to Action](#) was shared with legislators attending the Legislative Day, and the response was overwhelmingly in support of continued advocacy to reduce the magnitude of the proposed cuts. Many legislators spoke to the need for board members and superintendents to contact legislators to explain the budget’s impact on schools and students in classrooms.

Senate President Mike Miller provided an informative, pragmatic perspective reflecting his study of history and many years of experience in Annapolis. He spoke on the election of Governor Hogan and the proposed state budget in the context of the negative impact the federal funding downturn has had on Maryland's economy. President Miller emphasized that Governor Hogan's resolve to balance the budget and not raise taxes was affirmed by the overwhelming majorities of voters in 20 of 24 local jurisdictions. At the same time, President Miller distinguished the Governor's role to propose the budget and the legislature's role to deliberate and decide on the budget, including the impact on school funding. Encouragingly, he predicted the education funding cuts would not be as deep as proposed and thanked boards for their work.

Senate Minority Leader J.B. Jennings spoke to his strong support for public education, and the Governor's budget as reflecting his commitment to sustaining a strong investment in public education even as the state confronts serious budget challenges.

The Legislative Day audience also heard from Delegate Adrienne Jones, Speaker Pro Tem, and Chair of the Appropriations Committee's subcommittees responsible for education funding in the operating budget and school construction in the capital budget. Delegate Jones spoke to her concerns about the severity of the school funding cuts proposed in the Governor's budget, and her commitment to working to restore funding. She also spoke of the many new members elected to the House of Delegates, and on the Appropriations Committee, and encouraged board members to speak directly with their newly elected legislators on the budget and other priorities.

Senator Paul Pinsky, Vice-Chair of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, spoke not only to the budget, but also to his opposition to legislation to mandate a post-Labor Day start date for the school year, and his opposition to legislation to weaken the accountability provisions in Maryland's charter school law.

Senator Rich Madaleno, Vice-Chair of the Budget and Taxation Committee, offered his perspective on the challenges facing the legislature to balance the budget, and voiced his strong support for sustaining Maryland's investment in public education.

Senator Nancy King, Chair of the Budget and Taxation Committee's subcommittee responsible for education funding, emphasized that as a former member of the board of education in Montgomery County, she greatly appreciates the work of boards and the role that board members play as advocates in Annapolis.

Many other legislators offered remarks, including former board of education members Delegates Ned Carey, Ana Sol Gutierrez, and Susan Krebs. Again, MABE appreciates the legislators, board members and superintendents who made MABE's 2015 Legislative Day such a successful event.

Check out MABE's [Legislative Day Photos](#) on our Flickr page.

## **Call to Action to Oppose the Budget Cuts**

MABE issued the first [Call to Action](#) of 2015, urging all boards and board members contact their respective Delegates and Senators in Annapolis to restore the education budget cuts in the Governor's proposed state budget for the 2015-2016 school year.

Board members and all advocates for public education are encouraged to use the link provided to contact legislators by telephone and email. The message is short and to the point, and needs to be shared with new and returning legislators immediately. Link to [Legislators by County](#)

# Maryland Association of Boards of Education CALL TO ACTION

621 Ridgely Ave., Suite 300, Annapolis, MD 21401-1112      410-841-5414, 800-841-8197      www.mabe.org

## **MABE Calls for Action in Annapolis to Restore Education Budget Cuts**

On January 26, 2015, state budget analysts briefed the Delegates and Senators on the Appropriations and Budget committees on the Governor's proposed budget, which cuts more than \$144 million in education funding.

The fiscal year 2016 state budget is pending in Annapolis in two bills; the State Budget Bill (House Bill 70/Senate Bill 55), which cuts the foundation funding formula by more than \$76 million; and the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA) (House Bill 72/Senate Bill 57), which cuts the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) by more than \$68 million.

The budget briefing, for the first time, presented legislators with a clear picture of the proposed school funding cuts, from which no Maryland school system will be immune. Proposed cuts to each school system are:

Allegany - \$1,203,950	Harford - \$3,246,088
Anne Arundel - \$9,583,522	Howard - \$5,675,270
Baltimore City - \$21,847,626	Kent - \$108,065
Baltimore County - \$10,654,706	Montgomery - \$25,508,758
Calvert - \$2,391,655	Prince George's - \$37,997,410
Caroline - \$739,651	Queen Anne's - \$783,008
Carroll - \$3,347,277	St. Mary's - \$1,707,429
Cecil - \$1,758,893	Somerset - \$411,553
Charles - \$4,671,157	Talbot - \$151,904
Dorchester - \$508,009	Washington - \$2,614,988
Frederick - \$6,598,486	Wicomico - \$1,969,021
Garrett - \$310,505	Worcester - \$217,548

MABE President Verjeana Jacobs stated, "The statewide impact of these cuts would be stunning. By slashing more than \$144 million in public school funding, the Governor's budget would stall statewide progress to prepare our more than 860,000 students for success in college and career. Maryland's State Constitution calls on the Governor and General Assembly to make education funding the number one budget priority. The proposed budget fails to do so, and fails to fulfill the promise to our students to adequately and equitably fund all public schools across the state."

MABE urges all boards and board members in Maryland to immediately contact their legislators to oppose drastic education cuts in the Governor's proposed budget.

Link to [Roster of All Legislators by County and District](#)

For questions regarding this Call to Action, please contact John R. Woolums, Esq., Director of Governmental Relations, [jwoolums@mabe.org](mailto:jwoolums@mabe.org).

## Supporting the Governor’s Capital Budget for Public School Construction

The FY 2016 capital budget provides \$290.7 million for the state’s public school construction program. The capital budget includes \$280 million for the Public School Construction Program; \$250 million financed through General Obligation (GO) bonds and \$30 million financed through PAYGO expenditures. This is not only a robust investment in “shovel ready” school facility projects, but also exceeds what many predicted would be a “baseline” \$250 million school construction budget.

The \$280 million school construction budget is supplemented by \$6.1 million for the Aging Schools Program; \$4.6 million in Qualified Zone Academy Bonds; and \$6.5 million for a new academic building and dormitory at the Maryland School for the Blind.

One of MABE’s top priorities for the 2015 Session is 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. In our priority statement, MABE seeks an FY 2016 school construction budget that provides at least \$350 million to ensure that all Maryland schools are better learning environments to prepare our students to be college and career ready. The Governor’s budget, especially in light of the state’s capital debt affordability limits and operating budget challenges, substantially accomplishes MABE’s priority.

Therefore, MABE encourages board members to call or email the [Governor’s Office](#) to thank him for his investment in public school facility funding.

### Urge Legislators “Not to cosponsor bills to ...”

MABE is asking board members to contact legislators to respectfully request that they agree **not to co-sponsor** legislation which MABE will be opposing in the coming weeks. Priority bills on this list, which have not been introduced at this time, include the following:

- Shift the burden of proof to school systems and educators in special education IEP cases;
- Mandate a statewide post-Labor Day start date for the school year; and
- Fund private school vouchers through a new multi-million dollar tax credit program.

Board members and all advocates for public education are encouraged to use the link provided to contact legislators by telephone and email. Again, the message is short and to the point, and needs to be shared with new and returning legislators immediately. Link to [Legislators by County](#):

More information is available on each of these issues on MABE’s website.

## **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, visit 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, visit [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](#).