

February 28, 2015

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Public Charter School Expansion Act

On February 26, 2015 the House Ways and Means held a hearing on Governor Hogan's charter school reform legislation, [House Bill 486](#).

The hearing featured an opening presentation by the Governor's staff, followed by several panels of bill supporters and panels of opponents. The hearing lasted nearly 5 hours, and nearly an hour of this time was devoted to the testimony and questions directed to the local school system panel that included MABE's Legislative Committee Chair, Joy Schaefer; PSSAM Vice-President and Frederick County Superintendent, Dr. Theresa Alban; Alison Perkins-Cohen, Director of the Office of New Initiatives, Baltimore City Public Schools; and Kathy Lane, Director of Alternative Schools, Anne Arundel County Public Schools. This panel did an outstanding job of not only presenting a strong case for the current law and against the need for this legislation, but also responded directly to many of the question the proponents were unable to answer.

This panel demonstrated to the Committee members the high level of school system commitment to successful charter schools, and expertise in the critical areas of academic performance and financial accountability. Members of the committee clearly appreciated the opportunity to become better informed on charter school funding and operations, and the successful oversight and collaborative relationships between charter operators and school system administrators under the current law.

The MABE and PSSAM panel was followed by panels of representatives from the Maryland State Education Association and Baltimore Teachers Union who were strongly supported by members of the committee in their opposition to the bill's repeal of collective bargaining unit membership for charter school teachers.

On Wednesday, March 4, 2015, the Senate Education Committee will hold its hearing on the Charter School Expansion Act, [Senate Bill 595](#), MABE and PSSAM will once again present our positions in strong

Legislative Committee Calendar

- Session convened Jan. 14, 2015
- **March 2, 2015** – Guest: David Brinkley, Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management
- **March 16, 2015**
- **March 30, 2015** (*not April 6th!*)
- Session ends on April 13, 2015 - Monday @ midnight - 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](#).

support of local board authorization, highly qualified teachers and principals, and commensurate public funding of public charter schools. The Charter School Expansion Act would weaken or eliminate all of these standards and accountability measures, by:

- Removing the Maryland teacher certification requirements for charter school teachers and professional staff;
- Adopting a new, increased, per pupil funding formula that would provide 98% of all federal, state and local funds, minus only the Title I allocation;
- Allowing the State Board to grant a charter school a comprehensive waiver from all provisions of law and regulations applying to other public schools;
- Making the State Board of Education the chartering authorizer and employer for charter schools approved on appeal or for converted public schools;
- Making MSDE the school construction program administrator for all charter schools;
- Making charter schools eligible to participate in the state’s capital improvement program; and
- Allowing charter schools to grant preferences to students with special needs, and students within a specific school attendance area.

MABE opposes this legislation, based on our adopted Resolution and Legislative Position, which clearly state MABE’s support for the establishment of high quality public charter schools.

MABE supported passage of the 2003 Charter Schools Act because it clearly sets the same high standards for instruction and financial management as other public schools. The proposed legislation would set charter schools above other public schools, in terms of per pupil funding and facility funding, and at the same time weaken or eliminate quality assurances for teachers and principals. In addition, the proposed legislation would allow the State Board of Education to directly oversee the operation of charter schools it authorizes.

Local boards of education take very seriously the responsibility of governing the public schools within their respective local jurisdiction. Charter schools authorized by the State Board would create a two-tiered system by removing any local board and school system role in overseeing the quality of instruction, delivery of special education and other services, and monitoring the financial practices of charter schools.

These weaknesses, not strengths, are precisely what have plagued charter schools in other states. Maryland’s nearly 50 public charter schools are high performing both in terms of academics and finances and are educating 18,000 students each day.

MABE encourages local boards and board members to [call and email their Delegates and Senators](#) to urge opposition to the Charter School Expansion Act, House Bill 486 and Senate Bill 595.

Urge your elected officials to oppose the Charter School Expansion Act, because it would:

- Not require charter schools to hire qualified teachers or principals;
- Not require charter school staff to be public school employees;
- Allow comprehensive waivers from all laws and regulations applying to other public schools;
- Guarantee funding amounts above what is provided to other public schools; and
- Give charter schools special access to school construction funding.

Tax Credit Financed Funding for Nonpublic and Public School Students

The Governor announced in his State of the State address his support for providing tax credits to those who make voluntary contributions to private or parochial schools, and referred to the previously introduced Building Opportunities for All Students and Teachers, or BOAST, legislation. For many years Senator Ed DeGrange has been the lead sponsor in the Senate, and in the most recent legislative sessions the bill has been introduced as the Maryland Education Credit.

Now pending as [Senate Bill 405](#), and [House Bill 487](#), this legislation would establish a new tax credit program within the Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED) to issue state income tax credits for 60% of contributions, with tax credits not to exceed \$200,000. DBED would issue tax credit certificates, and then approved non-profit entities, called student assistance organizations, would review and approve applications from students for eligible education expenses.

Hearings were held in on February 25, 2015 in the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee; and on February 26, 2015 in the House Ways and Means Committee. MABE joined a panel of representatives from the Maryland PTA, Maryland State Education Association, the ACLU, and PSSAM to oppose the Maryland Education Credit legislation because its primary purpose is to create a private school funding program to finance private school student expenses, including tuition.

The legislation states the General Assembly's intent that future budgets should fund the tax credit program, through a new tax credit reserve fund, at no more than \$15 million annually. Recognizing that this \$15 million in tax credits represents 60% of the total contributions, the Maryland Education Credit would create a new program through which grants totaling \$25 million could be made to organizations to provide financial assistance to private and public school students. The difference between the House and Senate bills is that the House version would limit the funding to \$5 million in the first year, and phase-in annual increases up to \$15 million.

The Maryland Education Credit legislation would create a tax credit program and grant program, as follows:

- DBED would certify organizations to receive and approve applications from students for financial assistance for qualified education expenses;
- No more than 60% of appropriated funds must be allocated to tax credits for contributions to nonpublic school students;
- Eligible nonpublic schools must:
 - Hold a certificate of approval from MSDE;
 - Charge tuition at no more than the average public school per pupil expense amount;
 - Administer a nationally acknowledged student achievement test; and
 - Comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.
- No more than 40% of appropriated funds must be allocated to tax credits for contributions to public school students;
- Student Assistance Organizations must:
 - Provide financial assistance for qualified education expenses on a priority basis first to student applicants who are eligible for free and reduced price meals;
 - Distribute funding to at least four different schools; and

- Ensure that no less than 90% of contributions are designated for qualified education expenses, including: tuition and fees, tutoring, books, special needs services, transportation, school uniforms, and computers.

Again, MABE opposes the Maryland Education Credit legislation because its primary purpose is to create a private school funding program to finance private school student expenses. This program would be administered by the state and funded in large part through tax credits from funds which would otherwise be received as state income tax revenue. This diversion of state revenue to finance private school student expenses, including tuition, constitutes the voucher-like tuition tax credit program long opposed by MABE, and public education advocates in Maryland and across the nation.

Now is the time to contact Senators and Delegates to urge a NO vote on the Maryland Education Credit bills, [Senate Bill 405](#) and [House Bill 487](#),

Link to [Roster of Legislators by County](#); and the [Senate Budget and Taxation](#) and [House Ways and Means Committee](#).

Post-Labor Day Start Date Mandate

Legislation has been introduced by Delegate Healey, [House Bill 389](#), and Senator Mathias, [Senate Bill 455](#), to prohibit any public school under the jurisdiction of a local board of education from being open for pupil attendance before the day after Labor Day.

MABE strongly supports preserving the rights of local communities and boards of education to approve locally designed school calendars and therefore strongly opposes a post-Labor Day school year start-date as a new statewide mandate.

The hearing on [House Bill 389](#), was held on February 26, 2015 in the Ways and Means Committee. The lead proponent for the bill, State Comptroller Peter Franchot, introduced the bill and described the successful petition to gauge Marylanders' support for a post-Labor Day start of the school year. He also characterized the opponents as a tiny group of elites; a statement with which bill sponsor Delegate Ann Healy said she did not agree. The proponents include business leaders from across the state, but also prominently featured farmers and parents and students engaged in 4-H with concerns for the conflict with the Maryland State Fair.

Opponents of the bill were led by a panel including MABE's Legislative Committee Chair, Joy Schaefer; MABE's Immediate Past President Katie Groth; PSSAM Vice-President and Frederick County Superintendent, Dr. Theresa Alban; and Anne Arundel County's Teresa Tudor, who is Senior Manager of their School and Family Partnerships Division. This panel effectively communicated the critical and longstanding role of local community participation in the planning and agreement on school calendars.

Another very effective panel from Western Maryland, included: Garrett County Board Member, Charlotte Sebold; and Allegany County Board Member Laurie Marchini; Student Board Member, Karli Hakala; and Mt. Ridge High School Teacher, Stephanie Marchbank. In addition, Caroline County Board Member Jim Newcomb provided well-rounded testimony reflecting his experiences as a 4-H parent and local board member.

A Task Force to Study a Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools was created by Legislation enacted in 2013. The Task Force was charged with studying the impact of moving the start date of the public school year in the State to after Labor Day on the following areas: (1) the education system,

including the academic calendar, planning, administration, and facilities use; (2) the economy; and (3) summer tourism. On June 25, 2014 the Task Force issued its final report, making the singular recommendation “to recommend to the Governor, a post-Labor Day start date for Maryland Public Schools.”

On July 8, 2014, MABE joined the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland (PSSAM) and Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) in a [Joint Letter](#) voicing strong opposition to the Task Force recommendation – calling on the Governor and legislative leaders to recognize that “school-related decisions, should be determined locally and based on meeting the academic needs of our students, providing professional development for our faculties, and honoring the wishes of our communities.”

The Senate hearing is scheduled for March 11, 2015 in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Link to [Roster of Legislators by County](#) and the [Senate Education Committee](#) and [House Ways and Means Committee](#).

Bill to Shift the Burden of Proof to Educators in Special Education Cases

Bills have been introduced by Delegate Alonzo Washington, [House Bill 344](#), and Senator Montgomery, [Senate Bill 390](#), to shift the burden of proof to local school systems in due process proceedings conducted through the Office of Administrative Hearings and an administrative law judge serving in the role of an impartial hearing officer as required under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Unlike legislation introduced in previous legislative sessions, these bills would shift the burden of proof in special education disputes with the following exception: “A parent or guardian seeking tuition reimbursement for a unilateral placement of a student by the parent or guardian shall have the burden of proof in a due process proceeding.”

MABE opposes shifting the burden of proof, and instead emphasizes our support for a special education system that respects the dedication and professional expertise of special educators and school administrators to develop, in collaboration with parents, individual education programs (IEPs) which identify and determine which services are appropriate for the student. MABE believes this system should not be converted into one which presumes that the legal burden should be placed on the school system and educators to defend the sufficiency of the IEP. MABE supports maintaining the general legal principle that a complaining party has the burden to prove the merits of their complaint.

The Senate hearing was held on February 25, 2015 in the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee; and the House hearing will be held on March 5, 2015 in the House Ways and Means Committee.

The Senate hearing on February 25th was the first opportunity for a committee to hear the new version of this legislation, including the exception to the burden of proof being shifted in all cases other than unilateral requests by parents for nonpublic placements. The first panel of proponents also included Mike Durso, Montgomery County Board Member, following their recent vote to support the bill this year. During that panel’s testimony, Senator Ron Young raised his concern and objection to an amendment regarding the burden of proof in unilateral nonpublic placement cases. The response from the panel was that this was an amendment to be described by the next panel, which included representatives from the Maryland Disabilities Law Center. Bill sponsor Senator Karen Montgomery then rose from her seat and came into the audience to speak with the MDLC attorneys and stated to them that, with this amendment, they had just killed their own bill.

Following this moment of high drama, the MDLC panel did present testimony in favor of the following amendment. They explained the amendment was developed by private special education attorneys who asserted they would challenge the language in the bill as introduced. The bill language, as introduced is provided first, followed by the MDLC requested amendment.

(II) A PARENT OR GUARDIAN SEEKING TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR A UNILATERAL PLACEMENT OF A STUDENT BY THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN SHALL HAVE THE BURDEN OF PROOF IN A DUE PROCESS PROCEEDING CONDUCTED UNDER THIS SECTION.

(II) A PARENT OR GUARDIAN SEEKING TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR A UNILATERAL PLACEMENT OF A STUDENT BY THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN SHALL HAVE THE BURDEN OF PROVING THAT THE PLACEMENT SELECTED BY THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN CAN PROVIDE THE STUDENT WITH EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT ~~PROOF IN A DUE PROCESS PROCEEDING CONDUCTED UNDER THIS SECTION.~~

The school system panel opposing the bill included very effective testimony from special educators, including teachers from Charles County Public Schools and Wicomico County Public Schools, and Deborah Anzalone, Supervisor in the Prince George's County School System's Department of Special Education. This panel was able to present a very compassionate and professional perspective on the dedication of teachers and other educators and administrators to deliver special education services in accord with the IEP.

In addition, MABE voiced strong opposition to the proposal to amend a key provision of the 2015 version of the Burden of Proof bill to set a very low threshold for unilateral claims for school system payment for nonpublic placement decisions made by parents.

The House hearing will be held on Wednesday, March 4, 2014 in the Ways and Means Committee. MABE looks forward to even more prominent attendance and testimony from superintendents (who were largely unavailable the prior week due to a national conference) and panels representing local school systems opposing the shift of the burden of proof.

Link to [Roster of Legislators by County](#) and the [Senate Education Committee](#) and [House Ways and Means Committee](#).

BACKGROUND

In recent years, the General Assembly has considered and rejected legislation to place the burden of proof on the public agency (local school system or MSDE) in a special education-related due process hearing held to resolve disputes about the identification, evaluation, or educational placements of children with disabilities or the provision of a free appropriate public education. MABE strongly opposes such legislation, and supports the Supreme Court decision in a Maryland case, *Shaffer v. Weast* (2005), which upheld Maryland's recognition that parents should meet the burden of proving their complaint when they disagree with the IEP developed for their child.

While the "burden of proof" bill has failed to pass in recent years, several other special education-related bills have become law; intended to make significant improvements in the delivery and communication of special education programs and services. In 2014, [House Bill 413](#) passed to require each local board of education to develop and publish on its website a list of all special education service delivery models in the local school system; and the new law ensures that parents are provided a verbal and written explanation of the parents' rights and responsibilities and the procedural safeguards in the IEP process. Similarly,

legislation passed to require each local school system to provide parents of a child with a disability verbal and written information about access to services ([Senate Bill 701/House Bill 798](#)).

The Commission on Special Education Access and Equity was created by legislation enacted in 2013 ([House Bill 1161](#)). The Commission was charged with studying the extent to which parents and guardians of students with disabilities are made aware of their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and State law and regulations, and ways to improve the awareness of these rights; the effects of workload, caseload, and paperwork requirements related to the special education process on the ability of educators to provide a free and appropriate public education, and potential methods for mitigating these factors; and the disparity between the parties in special education due process hearings and potential methods for improving the process.

Importantly, the [Final Report](#) of the Commission on Special Education Access and Equity made several recommendations for further actions to improve the delivery of special education services, but did not recommend shifting the burden of proof.

MABE Legislative Committee Update

The next meeting of the Legislative Committee is scheduled for March 2, 2015, from 10:00 a.m. to noon in the MABE office.

MABE’s guest speaker will be David Brinkley, Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management

Overview - MABE Advocacy on the Governor’s FY 2016 Operating and Capital Budgets

MABE issued the first “Call to Action” of 2015 to have 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. 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 continue to 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.

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.

For additional information, go to the [Legislative Committee](#) section of MABE’s website, or contact [John Woolums](#), MABE’s Director of Governmental Relations.

Hearing Schedule – Highlights for March 4th

SB0057 (HB0072) MABE Position: Support with Amendment to Restore the Cuts	Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2015 - Supporting the restoration of education funding cuts including the full phase-in of the Net Taxable Income adjustment and inflation factor for FY 2016	Appropriations 3/3/2015 - 3:00 p.m. Budget and Taxation 3/4/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0440 MABE Position: Oppose	Education - Expenditures of Revenues - Reporting by County Boards of Education - Senator Pinsky	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/4/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0489 (HB0383) MABE Position: Oppose	Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Development and Implementation - Senator King	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/4/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0497 (HB0452) MABE Position: HOLD	Commission to Review Maryland's Use of Assessments and Testing in Public Schools - Senator Pinsky	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/4/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0504 (HB1095) MABE Position: Oppose	Public Schools - Nutrition Standards - Vending Machines and Marketing - Senator Young	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/4/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0505 (HB0894) MABE Position: Oppose	Primary and Secondary Education - Health and Safety - Sugar-Free Schools Act - Senator Young	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/4/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0506 (HB1209) MABE Position: Oppose	Education - Health and Safety - School Wellness Committees - Senator Young	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/4/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0538 (HB0535) MABE Position: Oppose	Blind or Visually Impaired Children - Individualized Education Programs - Orientation and Mobility Instruction - Senator Conway	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/4/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0595 (HB0486) MABE Position: Oppose	Public Charter School Expansion and Improvement Act of 2015 - President (Administration)	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/4/2015 - 1:00 p.m.

SB0672 (HB0992) MABE Position: Oppose	Public and Nonpublic Schools - Student Diabetes Management Program - Senator Young	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/4/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
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Hearing Highlights for March 5th

HB0344 (SB0390) MABE Position: Oppose	Education - Due Process Hearings for Children With Disabilities - Burden of Proof - Delegate Washington, A.	Ways and Means 3/5/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
HB0535 (SB0538) MABE Position: Oppose	Blind or Visually Impaired Children - Individualized Education Programs - Orientation and Mobility Instruction - Delegate Turner	Ways and Means 3/5/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
HB0668 MABE Position: Oppose	Education - Due Process Hearings for Children With Disabilities - Attorney's Fees - Delegate McConkey	Ways and Means 3/5/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
HB1025 MABE Position: Oppose	School Vehicles - Right Turn on Red – Prohibition - Delegate Folden	Environment and Transportation 3/5/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
HB1060 MABE Position: Oppose	Special Education - Individualized Education Program Facilitated Meetings – Delegate Luedtke	Ways and Means 3/5/2015 - 1:00 p.m.
HB1079 (SB0627) MABE Position: Oppose	Education - Maintenance of Effort Requirement – Alterations - Delegate Shoemaker	Ways and Means 3/5/2015 - 1:00 p.m.

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, go to MABE's [Federal Advocacy Center](#).