

December 4, 2015

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### MABE's 2016 Legislative Priorities

MABE's Legislative Committee, chaired by Joy Schaefer, voted on November 16, 2015, to adopt the association's legislative priorities and positions for the 2016 session. Also, see [Joy Schaefer and John Woolums](#) present MABE's legislative priorities in new video clips on MABE's website.

MABE's top priorities for the 2016 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;
- Support for full State funding for Maryland's outstanding public schools;
- Support for robust State funding for school construction and renovation projects; and
- Support for sustained local government investments in education.

### 2015-2016 Legislative Committee Calendar

- December 14, 2015 – **Guest Speaker: Dr. David Lever, PSCP Director**
- January 11, 2016 - 12:30 to 2:30  
(Session convenes Jan. 13, 2016)
- February 1, 2016
- **2016 Legislative Day Luncheon  
Friday, February 12, 2016  
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**  
(Note: The Legislative Committee will meet before the Luncheon, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.)
- February 29, 2016
- March 14, 2016
- April 4, 2016
- (Session Adjourns April 11, 2016)
- April 25, 2016 - Session Summary

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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](#).

MABE is supporting the following legislative positions and initiatives for state funding in FY 2017 and beyond:

- Support for sustaining a robust level of school funding in the FY 2017 State Budget, including the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) and inflation factor, to support Maryland's standards based school finance system.
- Support for legislation to create a commission to make legislative and funding recommendations in order to update and improve Maryland's school finance system.
- Support for a per pupil funding allocation for prekindergarten students, including a 0.5 FTE for half-day students and 1.0.

Two of these initiatives require legislative action to fulfill.

### **Education Funding Commission Bill**

MABE is seeking support for legislation to create blue ribbon commission on education funding to begin the process of translating the work of the consultant's studies and recommendations into legislative proposals for comprehensive funding reforms.

The proposed legislation would be very similar to the 1999 legislation which created the "Thornton" Commission and led to the passage of the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act in 2002. The new Commission would review the current education financing formulas and accountability measures and make recommendations to updating and enhancing the funding formulas established by the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002. The goal, as in the past, would be to convene legislative leaders and education, business, and local government stakeholders to craft legislation to ensure the long-term adequacy and equity of funding for students in public schools statewide.

### **Prekindergarten Funding Bill**

MABE is pursuing legislation for the first time to fully fund prekindergarten by establishing a true per pupil funding amount based on enrollment of the four-year olds we are mandated to serve.

Under current law, all children who are four years old on September 1 of that school year, who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals (FRPM) (i.e., from families whose income is at or below 185% of federal poverty guidelines (FPG)), whose parent or guardian seeks to enroll the child in a public prekindergarten program, must be admitted free of charge to publicly funded prekindergarten programs established by each of the local boards of education. State regulations require local school systems to provide prekindergarten for a minimum of 2.5 hours per day using certified early education teachers.

However, prekindergarten students are not included in the annual September 30 enrollment counts for State education aid. This means, by definition, that no per pupil state aid or the corresponding local share of per pupil funding is provided for approximately 30,000 prekindergarten students.

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) has long maintained that the funding provided by the Bridge to Excellence Act addressed the phase-out of the Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP), which funded prekindergarten programs at the time, by allocating 7% of the additional formula funding for the compensatory education program to support prekindergarten programs. MABE has adopted the position in support of legislation to fund prekindergarten based on a 0.5 FTE, without any off-setting reduction in compensatory education funding.

The proposed legislation would simply amend the law to add to the enrollment of kindergarten through grade 12 students, 50 percent of the enrollment of prekindergarten students. This amendment would clearly and accurately establish a per pupil funding amount to support the half-day (2.5 hour) mandated prekindergarten programs.

### **Legislative Committee Welcomed MACo Leadership**

MABE's Legislative Committee was pleased to welcome the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) to present and discuss legislative priorities and shared interests as the 2016 session approaches. MACo was represented by MACo's executive director Michael Sanderson, MACo's policy analyst Robin Clark Eilenberg, and Craig Rice, MACo's Education Subcommittee Chair and Montgomery County Councilmember (where he also chairs their education committee).

As anticipated, school construction funding and policy issued dominated the conversation. MACo shares MABE's strong support for robust state investment in the public school construction program and FY 2017 CIP. MABE's Legislative Committee chair, Joy Schaefer of Frederick County, emphasized the recent and dramatic cost increases in school construction in her county and across the state. The discussion touched on issues including the role of prevailing wage, the LEED "green" high performance building standards, and the rise in bids as the economy recovers from the recession. Council Member Rice emphasized public education as a priority, saying "it's a moral imperative...we need a robust education for our children." He also shared his perspective on the importance of education and the link between education and economic development, suggesting that "we haven't heard enough about this" as part of the public dialogue. Local board members agreed, with a follow-up discussion about how to highlight the economic return on investment for every dollar spent on public schools.

Michael Sanderson, MACo's Executive Director, described MACo's legislative priorities and provided an overview of county budgets. He noted that MACo's top priority, a restoration of highway user revenues to local governments, may not appear connected to education but represents a longstanding gap in local revenues that has put enormous pressure on local budgets, and therefore abilities to invest in schools.

MACo's education policy analyst Robin Clark described the MACo's education initiative and shared ideas for mitigating some of the cost drivers in school construction funding. MABE greatly appreciates the opportunity to share perspectives and priorities on key issues, and looks forward to ongoing dialogue, with our counterparts in local government.

## State Budget Update

On November 18 the Department of Legislative Services (DLS), led by the always dry-witted and insightful observations provided by Warren Deschenaux, presented a [comprehensive overview](#) of the outcomes of the FY 2016 state budget, and the outlook for FY 2017. The good news, certainly, is that the state is carrying a working fund balance for FY 2016 of \$346 million; and an expected fund balance of \$520 million as the Governor prepares the FY 2017 state budget. This strong report is bolstered by a record high rainy day fund of more than \$1 billion.

The following table shows the State investment in public elementary and secondary education, 2015 through 2017.

	<u>FY 2015</u>	<u>FY 2016</u>	<u>Baseline FY 2017</u>	<u>\$ Change 2016-2017</u>	<u>% Change 2016-2017</u>
<b>Public Schools</b>					
Foundation Program	\$2,882.4	\$2,947.1	\$2,977.2	\$30.1	1.0%
Supplemental Grant	46.6	46.6	46.6	0.0	0.0%
Geographic Cost Index	132.7	68.1	138.0	69.9	102.6%
Net Taxable Income Education Grants	26.9	23.8	37.4	13.6	56.9%
Foundation – Special Grants	0.6	0.1	0.0	-0.1	-100.0%
Compensatory Aid	1,251.7	1,305.1	1,357.1	51.9	4.0%
Student Transportation	258.4	266.2	271.5	5.2	2.0%
Special Education – Formula Aid	271.7	276.0	278.9	2.9	1.1%
Special Education – Nonpublic Placements	110.9	122.6	126.0	3.4	2.8%
Limited English Proficiency Grants	197.7	217.2	236.8	19.6	9.0%
Guaranteed Tax Base	59.4	53.8	54.9	1.1	2.1%
Aging Schools Program	6.1	6.1	6.1	0.0	0.0%
Head Start/Pre-kindergarten	6.1	6.1	6.1	0.0	0.0%
Other Education Programs	92.3	73.9	65.6	-8.3	-11.2%
<b>Subtotal Direct Aid</b>	<b>\$5,343.5</b>	<b>\$5,412.8</b>	<b>\$5,602.2</b>	<b>\$189.4</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
Retirement Payments	\$738.6	\$729.3	\$721.6	-\$7.7	-1.1%
<b>Total Public School Aid</b>	<b>\$6,082.0</b>	<b>\$6,142.1</b>	<b>\$6,323.8</b>	<b>\$181.7</b>	<b>3.0%</b>

Source: Dept. of Legislative Services

## Teachers' Retirement Cost Gap Update

Maryland's 24 school systems soon face a gap between local funding and their State Retirement Agency bills for shifted teacher retirement costs. In 2012 the General Assembly shifted 100% of the "normal" cost share of teachers' retirement costs to local boards of education. Since FY 2013, school board funding obligations have been matched substantially by mandated local government payments to local boards. ([Funding Tables](#) from HB 1301 (2012))

In FY 2016, the shifted cost was rolled into the mandated maintenance of effort amount going forward. This means any future growth in the "normal" costs will be included in the bills received by the local boards, without any provision of a funding source. In FY 2017, the growth over FY 2016 is estimated to be \$25 million statewide.

This unfunded mandate will pose a significant challenge for most local boards in the coming year, and therefore MABE will pursue opportunities for additional state and/or local aid.

## **School Construction Standards**

The Interagency Committee on School Construction (IAC) has issued a report requested by Governor and Board of Public Works, entitled "[The Cost of School Construction: A Comparison of the Monarch Global Academy and Conventional School Facilities.](#)" The Monarch Global Academy is a "contract school" that is operated by the Children's Guild as a kindergarten-thru-8th grade (K-8) school under a 10- year contract, with three 5-year renewal options for a possible total of 25 years. This school arose from the desire within the school system and local community to address overcrowding in existing schools. As the report states, "To solve the problem, in 2008 AACPS conceptualized an arrangement under which an educational contractor would provide the educational program, partnering with a developer to construct and own a facility. This arrangement would achieve several goals: it would relieve the over-crowding at the three elementary schools; it would give parents a choice of schools within the area; and it would allow the developers to proceed with construction of housing."

As a privately owned and financed school facility under contract to the school system, the project cost was substantially less than that of a comparable public school. This has attracted the attention of the Governor and Comptroller and legislators interested in maximizing the value of available school construction dollars.

The report responds to the request to "compare a privately-financed and owned school in Anne Arundel County, the Monarch Global Academy, to public school facilities that use conventional construction methods and technologies." The objective of the report is "to determine if there are aspects of the Monarch facility that can be incorporated into conventional school buildings in order to significantly reduce construction costs."

The IAC's report compares costs, and construction standards and requirements, of the Monarch school and another elementary school in Anne Arundel County, Rolling Knolls Elementary. The report analyzes cost factors, including: building size and design, local educational specifications, building technologies, code and regulatory requirements, project delivery method, schedule, and procurement requirements.

The report finds that the most important factor in the overall difference in cost between the two facilities (\$9.67 million) is attributable to the difference between their educational specifications. There is also a significant difference in the square-foot cost: Monarch (\$184.76) and Rolling Knolls (\$252.65). Notably, as a privately owned and constructed facility, Monarch's construction did not involve compliance with state procurement or design requirements, including: prevailing wage, minority business enterprise (MBE), emergency shelter electrical capacity, and high performance building standards (green/LEED).

Regarding prevailing wage, the report finds: "There is incontrovertible evidence that prevailing wage rates increase construction costs. The PSCP has examined 262 trade package and small project bids that were solicited both with and without prevailing wage rates, and find that prevailing wage rates increase bid costs by an average of 11.65%."

Construction standards and durability concerns are noted based on the differences between Monarch's use of a pre-engineered steel construction and interior gypsum wallboard partitions, instead of masonry and steel frame construction and masonry interior walls.

Educational specification issues identified in the report include: lack of acoustic tiles and room separation to control noise; lack of collaborative teaching space; and small library/media center/computer lab. The report also reviews building systems, including: finishes, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical. One difference, and cost saving, attracting attention is Monarch's use of PVC pipes instead of metal pipes.

The report recommends site visits and further analysis to explore lessons from Monarch's approach. Finally, the report recommends establishing a task force to study in detail the full range of cost reduction measures that may be applicable to public school facilities in Maryland, including State educational requirements, non-educational regulations such as stormwater management, prevailing wage rates, alternative building technologies, project delivery methods, and project procurement methods.

Lastly, the report notes that the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) is conducting a separate study, through a consultant, to examine standards and cost issues relative to privately-built school facilities and conventionally built public school facilities.

MABE looks forward to having David Lever address the Legislative Committee on December 14.

### Diabetes Management by Volunteers

During the 2015 legislative session, MABE strongly opposed [Senate Bill 672](#), which would impose a substantial unfunded mandate on local school systems to train and employ additional staff to provide medical services to students with diabetes.

This legislation would create a new school health services program to require school system employees to provide diabetes care to students during the school day and while attending school-sponsored activities. Student diabetes management programs would be required in each school, and the bill intends for the health care to be provided by trained volunteers. MABE, and the local boards we represent, are deeply concerned with the scope of the fiscal impact and liabilities arising from these proposals.

The diabetes management program proposed by Senate Bill 672 would require schools to:

- Recruit employees who are interested in becoming trained diabetes care providers;
- Provide training for employee volunteers before the commencement of a school year or when required by the enrollment of a student with a Diabetes Medical Management Plan;
- Designate locations within the school where a student may privately perform diabetes care tasks;

- Require the school nurse or a trained diabetes care provider to be on-site and available to provide diabetes care services during school hours and at school-sponsored activities, including field trips;
- Establish a system of communication between school administrators and the faculty, school nurse, trained diabetes care providers, parents or guardians of students, and students;
- Facilitate the access of authorized school personnel to student Diabetes Medical Management Plans; and
- Establish procedures for diabetes-related emergencies.

School system health professionals have raised serious concerns regarding these proposals, most notably the proposed mandate to recruit volunteers among school system staff to provide routine and emergency administration of medications. This proposal would require maintaining the level of skills, training, practice and supervision required to ensure the competency of these volunteers. MABE believes that existing laws such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act already provide the legal framework governing school system responsibilities to serve students with diabetes. School administrators and school health professionals are currently required to provide appropriate care for students with diabetes during the school day. These medical services are provided to the individual student by a trained school health team, and are based upon the student's self-management abilities. MABE opposes the breadth and scope of the mandate to train non-nursing staff (teachers and other staff) as inconsistent with advancing the quality of the commitment to providing medical services to students with diabetes in accordance with professional nursing standards.

On November 21, 2015, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and MSDE, in conjunction with the Children's National Health System, held a stakeholders meeting on "Diabetes Management in Schools." Very informative presentations were made by Dr. Fran Cogen with Children's National Health System; Shirley Devaris with the Maryland Board of Nursing; and Nancy Mattucci and Mary Nasuta with the Maryland Association of School Health Nurses. This meeting heightened awareness about the need for high quality school health services, and adequate training of all staff involved with students with diabetes.

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends the following related to school staff training:

- All school staff members who have responsibility for a student with diabetes should receive training that provides a basic understanding of the disease and know who to contact in an emergency;
- A small group of school staff members should receive training from a school nurse or another qualified health care professional such as a physician or a nurse with expertise in diabetes, and also in student-specific routine and emergency care; and
- The school nurse or another qualified health professional should be involved with training of appropriate staff and providing ongoing professional supervision and consultation regarding routine and emergency care of students with diabetes.

MABE looks forward to further discussions with the ADA, MSDE and DHMH, and legislators on how school systems are implementing the steps recommended above, and the extent to which they are available to local school systems without the need for new legislation.

## **Adequacy Study & Reports**

Maryland's Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act, adopted by the General Assembly in 2002, was based on extensive funding adequacy cost studies, conducted from 1999 through 2001 by the Augenblick and Myers consulting firm under the auspices of the "Thornton Commission on Education Finance, Equity and Excellence". This landmark legislation restructured Maryland's public school financing system and phased-in state aid increases to Maryland public schools over a six-year period.

In addition to establishing new standards-based primary state education aid funding formulas, the 2002 Act also called for a comprehensive follow-up funding adequacy study to be conducted approximately ten years following its passage and subsequently was amended to require this study to commence in 2014. Specifically, the consultants are conducting this mandated comprehensive follow-up study and their services are required through April 30, 2017, to ensure their availability through the 2017 Session of the Maryland General Assembly.

MABE President Verjeana Jacobs established the MABE Ad Hoc Committee on the Study of School Funding Adequacy in January of 2015 with the expressed charge to provide a forum for discussing and informing MABE's participation on MSDE's "Cost of Adequacy of Education Funding in the State of Maryland Stakeholder Group". This MSDE stakeholder group was created to monitor the mandated adequacy study being conducted under a \$1.1 million state contract with consultants Augenblick, Palaich and Associates. MABE Executive Director Francie Glendening is representing the Association on MSDE's Stakeholder Group.

MABE's ad hoc committee meets monthly and has welcomed guest speakers including Kristy Michel, MSDE's Chief Operating Officer; and Rachel Hise, DLS's Lead Principal Policy Analyst. The committee's next scheduled meetings are October 16 and November 20. Meetings are open to all local school board members. On MABE's website, the [Priorities Issues page](#) provides links to the ad hoc committee's materials, the MSDE Stakeholder Group meeting materials, and the consultants' reports, interim and final. MABE is also preparing a consolidated overview and position statement on the reports issued by the consultants and priority issues going forward.

The consultants are now conducting studies and issuing reports as required by the legislation and the terms of their contract, on issues including school size, measures of economic disadvantage and concentration of poverty, the impact of enrollment growth and decline on school funding. Three types of studies are being conducted to gauge the adequacy and equity of school funding in Maryland, including: Professional Judgment, Successful Schools, and Evidence-Based. [MSDE's website](#) provides links to all of the interim and final reports and State Workgroup meeting materials. Links to Adequacy Studies and Reports:

- [Interim Report on the Methodology and Progress of the Adequacy Cost Study](#)
- [Final Report: School Size Study](#)

- [Evaluation of the use of FRPM Eligibility as a Proxy for Economic Disadvantage](#)
- [Evaluation of the Impact of Increasing and Declining Enrollment](#)
- [Literature Review – Effects of Concentrations of Poverty](#)
- [Geographic Cost of Education Adjustment for Maryland](#)
- [Analysis of School Finance Equity & Local Wealth Measures in Maryland](#)

## **College/Career Readiness**

MABE has engaged the Maryland State Department of Education in dialogue to help ensure the successful implementation of reforms to instruction, assessments and educator evaluations arising from the adoption of the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards.

MSDE and MABE leaders are meeting to develop a process to facilitate local input on the definition of standards for college and career readiness and the instructional, assessment, and professional development programs developed to fulfill the mission that all of Maryland’s high school graduates achieve this readiness standard.

MABE’s Committee on College and Career Readiness Standards has adopted several specific recommendations aligned with the recommendations adopted by the State workgroup that concluded its work in the spring of 2015 (Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Implementation Review Workgroup). MABE’s key proposals focus on the need to define and identify appropriate measures of college and career readiness; promote equitable approaches to school technology to benefit all students in the state; identify collaborative approaches to communications and community engagement; and assess and report on the effectiveness and projected funding needs of professional development of teachers and principals.

## **Commission on Testing**

2015 legislation created the [Commission to Review the Use of Assessments and Testing in Maryland Public Schools](#), which met for the first time on November 17, 2015 (House Bill 452, Ch. 421, 2015). The work of MSDE and the Commission was set forth in two stages.

First, MSDE was required to survey local school systems by August 31, 2015, primarily to “assess how much time is spent in each grade and in each local school system on administering local, State, and federally mandated assessments” and to “review the purpose of all local, State, and federally mandated assessments administered by local school systems, whether summative or formative, and determine whether some assessments are duplicative or otherwise unnecessary.” The more than 300-page “Report on Local, State, and Federally-Mandated Assessments in Maryland,” includes responses from each of the 24 local school systems; and describes the state’s adoption of the Common Core State Standards in 2010, the subsequent development of Maryland-specific College and Career Readiness Standards, and implementation of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments.

The report compiles responses from local school systems on the array of locally-mandated assessments, and states, “This variation reflects the strong tradition of local autonomy and

decision-making that exists in Maryland. Local school boards are elected or appointed to make decisions that best reflect the values and desires of local communities.”

[MABE's letter to State Board](#) commenting on the survey voices strong support for local board and school system governance, and discretion concerning student assessment policies and practices. MABE notes that school systems’ responses emphasize the role of formative and summative assessments in educating students; measuring what students know and informing the appropriate instruction to benefit individual students. Common themes include: the use of data systems and interactive platforms to analyze student assessment data and immediately inform teachers in the classroom; the recent and ongoing transition to on-line assessments; and the ongoing responsibility to provide professional development for teachers and principals.

Following the survey, local boards and other stakeholders were provided the opportunity to review and comment on the survey results. MABE did so in a November letter to State Board President Guffrie Smith. MABE emphasized that the report reflects the fact that the General Assembly has expressly delegated to local boards, in conjunction with the State Board, the responsibility for developing curriculum and student assessments. MABE’s letter urges the State Board and legislature to continue to adhere to the principle of locally-governed education policies and practices regarding student assessments.

Second, the Commission is to meet and make recommendations regarding “how local school systems and the State can improve the process in which local, State, and federally mandated assessments are administered and used to inform instruction” and “the most efficient and effective methods to ensure that adequate time is allotted to both administering assessments and instruction.” MABE firmly believes that the coordination of these efforts by educational professionals within local school systems is essential to the continuous improvement of public education in Maryland, toward the goal of each student achieving his or her highest potential as a learner. MABE looks forward to advocating this position as the Commission proceeds to analyze the schedules, purposes, and instructional value of local, state, and federally-mandated assessments.

### **ESEA Reauthorization**

The House and the Senate have passed their respective versions of reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The House passed H. R. 5, the “Student Success Act,” on July 8, 2015 by a vote of 218 to 213. Then, on July 16, 2015, the Senate passed S. 1177, the “Every Child Achieves Act,” by a vote of 81 to 17. Both bills include provisions for local governance that MABE and NSBA support. The Every Student Succeeds Act appears poised for further legislative action in the very near future.

The House is expected to consider the legislation in early December. NSBA sent a [letter](#) of support on December 2 to all U.S. Representatives, a [call to action](#) to FRN members and issued the [NSBA press release](#). NSBA has prepared a very helpful [ESSA Transition Timetable and Frequently Asked Questions: A Local School Board Primer](#) to identify and summarize key provisions of the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#), the House-Senate Conference Committee for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

On December 1, 2015 NSBA wrote to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the U.S House of Representatives and Nancy Pelosi, House Democratic Minority Leader:

"The National School Boards Association (NSBA), representing more than 90,000 local school board members across the nation, working with and through our state associations, supports passage of the "Every Student Succeeds Act," and applauds the work of the Conference Committee for its bipartisan effort to modernize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Chairman John Kline and Senior Democratic Member Bobby Scott have led the process in the House to develop legislation that will positively affect the educational outcomes of our nation's 50 million public school students, the performance of our more than 13,000 public school districts, and the success of both our communities and our nation. We urge your support for the passage of the "Every Student Succeeds Act."

Much has occurred in recent weeks as the House and Senate have made historic strides toward final passage of the long-awaited and overdue reauthorization and updating of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The NCLB law, regulations, and related guidance have long been outdated. This led to the law being replaced with comprehensive waivers approved by the U.S. Department of Education. These waivers have provided much needed flexibility, but at the same time have allowed the federal government to leverage requirements on a state by state basis.

On September 29, 2015 the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and nine other national education groups sent a [joint letter urging lawmakers to complete work](#) to overhaul the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), known as the "No Child Left Behind Act" and get a conferenced bill to the President's desk by the end of this year. NSBA continues to work closely with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to advocate for a final education bill that underscores the importance of local governance and community ownership, so that our nation's 90,000 school board members will be better positioned to offer all students a world-class public education.

And on November 19, 2015 the conference committee reached agreement. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) praised lawmakers for reaching a bipartisan, bicameral conference committee agreement to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

"Today's completion of the House and Senate Conference Report is good news for our nation's 90,000 local school board members, and an historic opportunity to reaffirm the importance of local governance and community ownership in public education, as our school districts strive for continuous gains in student achievement," stated Thomas J. Gentzel, Executive Director of the National School Boards Association. "NSBA applauds lawmakers for restoring regular order in the legislative process and working with our school boards and education stakeholders to achieve this important step towards the passage of a

final bill that will modernize ESEA and facilitate greater innovation in education for school districts and states,” said Gentzel.

## **MABE’s Advocacy Centers**

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.

### Annapolis Advocacy Center

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.

### State Board Advocacy Center

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.

### Federal Advocacy Center

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.

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