

January 29, 2016

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Session Update

MABE is pleased to report that Senator Joan Carter Conway and Delegate Alonzo Washington have agreed to sponsor the Prekindergarten Enrollment and Funding legislation supported by a broad education coalition. Also, MABE continues to anticipate the introduction of legislation to create a commission on education funding. Stay tuned for updates and alerts on these priority issues as the bills are introduced, hearing dates are scheduled, and calls to action announced.

Several bills on student assessments have been introduced and are scheduled for hearings. MABE opposes [HB 141](#) and [SB 407](#), which would require the State Board of Education to adopt regulations limiting the amount of time in the aggregate that may be devoted to federal, State, and locally mandated tests for each grade to 2% of the specified minimum required annual instructional hours. [HB 397](#) would establish uniform standards and best practices in the administration of student assessments; and [HB 412](#) would require each county board of education to provide information relating to each assessment administered in a local school system that includes the title, purpose, grade level tested, subject area, testing window, time to complete, loss of instruction time, and accommodations for students with special needs.

2016 Legislative Committee Calendar

- (Session convened 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

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](#).

In addition, a recently introduced bill, [SB 404](#), would require the State Board of Education to appoint or reappoint the State Superintendent of Schools with the advice and consent of the Senate. MABE has not taken a position on this bill, which is scheduled for a hearing on February 10.

Proposed Seatbelt Mandate

The bill proposing to mandate seatbelts on all school buses by 2022, [SB 183](#), will be heard in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee on February 2. MABE, PSSAM and MACo will testify in opposition, focusing on the magnitude of the unfunded mandate to implement a \$50 million to \$70 million program without any provision of new state funding.

Other issues of major concern with this bill include the requirement to replace or retrofit relatively new buses by 2022 rather than allowing school systems to use their buses for the approved 12 to 15 years and instead adopting a prospective procurement standard for all new buses. Retrofitting raises more safety concerns than a new bus design standard. But again, a rolling procurement mandate for new buses equipped with seatbelts, without any additional state funding, would result in the same enormous unfunded mandate for local school systems.

Lastly, the bill includes provisions which, although well intended, would create unworkable challenges for our bus drivers and student transportation systems. These include the proposed rules that the bus cannot be operated unless all students are seated and all students under age 16 are restrained by a seatbelt.

Early Graduation Grants - Executive Order

On Wednesday, January 27, Governor Hogan signed an Executive Order establishing a new Early Graduation Scholarship Program. [Executive Order 01.01.2016.03](#) directs the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to establish the program to allow eligible 11th grade students to receive a one-time scholarship of up to \$6,000 for tuition and expenses at any approved postsecondary educational institution in Maryland.

“The best and most important part of this program is that it makes college more affordable and more accessible for Maryland students and families. It’s also a smart use of tax dollars. By encouraging high-achieving students to complete high school a year early, the state can reallocate what would have been spent on a student’s last year of public high school, and help with the first year of college instead.”

- [Governor’s Press Release](#)

The Executive Order states that this new program will be available to students planning to enter college in the fall of 2016 who meet the requirements set forth by the Maryland State Board of Education for granting a high school diploma by the end of grade 11. Eligible applicants for the scholarship must be residents of Maryland and enrolled at a publicly supported school on a full-time equivalency basis. Applicants for the scholarship must secure acceptance to an approved postsecondary educational institution within six months of graduating high school.

New Bill Highlights

Bill Report & Hearing Schedule – [January 29, 2016 Report](#) and [Hearing Schedule](#).

HB 352 - Office of Legislative Audits - Local School System Audits - Repeal - Repealing the requirement that the Office of Legislative Audits conduct audits of local school systems at least once every 6 years; repealing the requirement for the Legislative Auditor to appoint professional staff to conduct audits of local school systems; etc. (MABE Position: Support)

HB 430 – Education - Student Data Privacy Council - Creating a legislative and stakeholder commission to review the implementation of the Student Data Privacy Act of 2015 and make regulatory and legislative recommendations. (MABE Position: No Position)

SB 267 - Public Schools - Voluntary Nonsectarian Prayer at School-Sponsored Student Events - Requiring specified county boards of education to allow nonsectarian student-initiated voluntary prayer during mandatory and voluntary school-sponsored student events; providing that the Act does not diminish specified rights of specified individuals relating to free speech and the free exercise of religion; providing that the exercise of specified rights may not be construed as a specified support, approval, or sanction of the contents of a specified prayer. (MABE Position: Oppose)

SB 269 - Education - Public School Holidays - Veterans' Day - Requiring Veterans' Day to be a public school holiday. (MABE Position: Oppose)

SB 404 - State Board of Education - State Superintendent of Schools - Appointment - Requiring the State Board of Education to appoint or reappoint the State Superintendent of Schools with the advice and consent of the Senate by April 1; requiring the State Board to appoint an interim State Superintendent if the State Board does not appoint or reappoint a State Superintendent by April 1, the Senate does not confirm the appointment or reappointment, or a vacancy occurs in the office of State Superintendent; etc.

Bill Hearing & Briefing Schedule

- February 8, at 1:00 MABE, PASSAM and MDPTA will brief the Commission to Review Maryland's Use of Assessments in Public Schools on MABE's perspectives on the survey of mandated testing and testing issues coming before the commission. Location: Howard County Public Schools, Board Room B, 10910 Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City.

Bill Title	Hearing Schedule	MABE Position
SB 183 - School Vehicles - Seat Belts – Requirements	<u>Judicial Proceedings</u> 2/2/2016 - 1:00 p.m.	Oppose
SB 267 - Public Schools - Voluntary Nonsectarian Prayer at School-Sponsored Student Events	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs	Oppose

	2/3/2016 - 1:00 p.m.	
SB 269 - Education - Public School Holidays - Veterans' Day	<u>Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs</u> 2/3/2016 - 1:00 p.m.	Oppose
HB 72 - Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Development and Implementation	<u>Ways and Means</u> 2/4/2016 - 2:00 p.m.	Oppose
HB 85 - Education - Children With Disabilities - Support Services - Parental Notification	<u>Ways and Means</u> 2/4/2016 - 2:00 p.m.	No Position
SB 421 - Special Education - Translations of Individualized Education Programs or Individualized Family Service Plans - Native Language	<u>Ways and Means</u> 2/4/2016 - 2:00 p.m.	Oppose
HB 141 / SB 407 - Education - Education Accountability Program - Limits on Testing	<u>Ways and Means</u> 2/11/2016 - 1:00 p.m.	Oppose
HB 145 - Public School Labor Relations Board - Renegotiation Procedures and Administration	<u>Ways and Means</u> 2/11/2016 - 1:00 p.m.	Oppose

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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