

BILL: House Bill 1403
TITLE: Next Generation Scholars of Maryland
POSITION: SUPPORT
DATE: March 10, 2016
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's twenty-four local boards of education, supports House Bill 1403.

MABE supports House Bill 1403 in order to establish a fund to implement the College Readiness Outreach Program, renamed to become the Next-Generation Scholars of Maryland Program. The keystone of the legislation is to provide students with guaranteed access (GA) grants to help ensure that students receive the critical support that will assist them in remaining on track from middle school through high school and ultimately be fully prepared to be successful in a Maryland institution of higher education.

House Bill 1403 would mandate \$5 million in FY 2018 through 2023 that could be awarded to qualifying nonprofit entities to administer the Next Generation Scholars Program in counties that have at least 50% of their students eligible to receive a free lunch under the National School Lunch Program. The nonprofits administering this program would:

- Identify 7th and 8th graders who would qualify for a GA grant;
- Assist those qualifying students in completing college preparatory curriculum, graduating from high school, and attending an in-state institution of higher education; and
- Provide other services including a high school graduation plan, summer work or internship opportunities, financial aid literacy assistance, career interest assessments, mentorship and one-on-one counseling, visits to college campuses and workplaces, a summer bridge program between high school and college, and a college graduation plan.

Seventh or eighth graders who are determined to qualify for a GA must agree, in writing, to the following requirements throughout their secondary and undergraduate career. They must satisfy the attendance policy of the applicable school, refrain from substance abuse, apply for admission to an institution of higher education during the student's senior year of high school, complete and file for federal student aid for each year that they plan to enroll in postsecondary education, participate in the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland program, and maintain a G.P.A. of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. In these ways, students' prospects for successful graduation and transition to a successful college experience will be greatly enhanced – and all Marylanders will benefit.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 1403.