

**BILL:** Senate Bill 910  
**TITLE:** Maryland Education Development Collaborative - Establishment  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**DATE:** March 17, 2016  
**COMMITTEE:** Budget and Taxation Committee  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 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, opposes Senate Bill 910. MABE opposes establishing the Maryland Education Development Collaborative (EDCO) as a body politic and corporate instrumentality in order to carry out numerous functions and exercise significant authority in conflict with the statutory authority of the State Board of Education and local boards of education throughout the state.

The core functions proposed to be assigned to EDCO include the development of curricula and school designs; policy areas well within the purview of local boards of education. Maryland statute provides that "educational matters that affect the counties shall be under the control of a county board of education" and that local boards "determine, with the advice of the county superintendent, the educational policies of the county school system" (§§4-101 and 4-108, Education Article). The General Assembly has delegated to the State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Schools establishes considerable authority to adopt regulations and guidance, and issue legal opinions governing elementary and secondary education in the state. Each local school board establishes policies and procedures for its public schools, in accordance with a complex and comprehensive array of federal, state and local laws and budget procedures.

Regarding funding, the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002 has provided significant increases in state funding for public schools according to a standards-based approach to school financing. Under this approach, the state has demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring that public school systems have adequate and equitable resources to meet student performance standards, while providing maximum local flexibility to allocate resources.

MABE firmly believes that local boards must continue to play a vital role in governing the local school system, advocating for public education, and engaging local communities and promoting participation by parents and other community members in the education process. Local board governance is needed so that everyone feels a responsibility for, and ownership of, Maryland's public schools and our students' futures. By retaining local decision-making authority, boards can best balance educational practices, available resources to implement those practices, community input, and academic and financial accountability.

Maryland's nationally recognized success in providing a high quality public education throughout the State is the direct result of the policies and priorities adopted by each of the 24 local boards of education. Maryland's local boards recognize and affirm that a basic premise of our nation's system of public education is that public schools should be governed locally.

Most importantly, Maryland's local boards of education have a proven record of striving to continuously improve their abilities to govern in a manner that best meets the needs of the students. Local board governance authority, in the context of state laws and regulations established to ensure statewide standards and accountability, must be preserved as we implement state and federal education reforms to benefit all of Maryland's students. Today, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and school systems are collaborating to implement updated student learning objectives, student assessments, educator evaluation systems, and school technology programs to support Maryland's commitment to College and Career Readiness for all students.

Senate Bill 910 proposes to establish a state-sponsored corporate entity to compete with local school systems for limited local, state and federal resources to promote the very policy initiatives already assigned to Maryland's 24 local boards of education. Much innovation and excellence is already occurring throughout our public schools, and more will follow, as long as we remain collectively focused on investing in public education and enhancing the abilities of local boards of education to govern high performing school systems on behalf of Maryland's more than 860,000 students.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 910.