

Maryland Association of Boards of Education



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August 16, 2016

Dr. Karen B. Salmon
State Superintendent of Schools
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-2595

Dear Dr. Salmon:

We are writing on behalf of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all twenty-four local boards of education, regarding the State's implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). In partnership with the State Board of Education, as the governing bodies empowered to adopt public education policies in the State, MABE and the local boards we represent know that robust community engagement is essential to our common success. Therefore, MABE appreciates the formation of the ESSA Stakeholder Committee; and believes that local boards and educational organizations benefit from MSDE's process of reporting to, and seeking input from, these key partners and stakeholders.

In this context, MABE requests the following actions to help ensure the successful development and implementation of Maryland's ESSA Plan. First, MABE requests that the ESSA Stakeholder Committee continue to meet throughout the implementation of ESSA; to extend beyond the spring of 2017 when the State Plan must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education and continue to meet and gather input through the 2017-2018 school year.

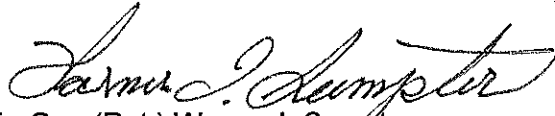
Second, MABE requests that the membership of the Stakeholder Committee be expanded to include all interested parties. MABE appreciates being represented on the Stakeholder Committee by Ellen Flynn Giles, and knows that other groups are interested in being more fully engaged in the process. Recognizing the challenge to manage the work of an expanded committee, MABE suggests the formation of subcommittees to facilitate more thorough discussions and exploration of the many complex policy issues arising under ESSA.

Third, MABE requests the State's support for an extended ESSA implementation timeline, including: 2016-2017 as a transition year; 2017-2018 as the first year for collecting school data under a new state accountability system, and 2018-2019 being the first year schools would be identified as needing supports and improvements based on these new standards. We request that MSDE and the State Board adopt a State Plan and proceed in a manner that engages local boards over multiple school years to reform Maryland's school performance accountability system. Currently, Congress and the U.S. Department of Education are debating the scope of regulations regarding local and state report cards, methods for calculating student achievement, and the identification of schools for targeted support and school-wide improvement. These and other issues warrant a prudent approach to adopting reforms at the state and local levels.

MABE is committed to collaborative involvement in Maryland's consideration of the optimal ways in which ESSA can benefit our students. Local boards know that our educators, parents, students, and many other educational and community partners are counting on us to do so. Toward this end, MABE has formed an Ad Hoc Committee on ESSA to provide a forum for members of local boards to discuss and recommend MABE positions on issues pertaining to ESSA. As MABE continues this work, we offer any assistance that we may provide MSDE and the State Board of Education.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding our specific requests and to our collaboration on the successful implement of ESSA and the continuous improvement of our education efforts on behalf of all of Maryland's students.

Sincerely,



Brig.Gen.(Ret.) Warner I. Sumpter
President



Joy Schaefer
Secretary and Ad Hoc
ESSA Committee Chair

WIS:JS:kwb

Copy:

Andrew R. Smarick, State Board President
MABE Board of Directors
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Frances Hughes Glendening, MABE Executive Director