

LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION GOVERNANCE

MABE POSITIONS

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education, representing all local boards of education in Maryland:

- ✓ **Supports** local board governance of education policy and administration, and believes that this principle is fundamental to an effective system of public education that promotes high standards of academic and fiscal accountability.
- ✓ **Supports** local board control of, and accountability for, appropriations of the school system budget.
- ✓ **Supports** adequate and equitable state funding for state mandated programs and policies, and that local board governance autonomy and flexibility are respected in funding decisions.
- ✗ **Opposes** executive, legislative, and agency actions and proposals which would have the effect of reducing or circumscribing local board authority or creating unfunded mandates.

BACKGROUND

MABE believes the principle of local governance by boards of education is fundamental to a sound system of public education; and that a sound system of public education is fundamental to sustaining the well-educated citizenry essential to a flourishing democracy. By retaining decision-making authority at the local level, local boards of education can best balance educational practices, available resources to implement those practices, public input, and academic and financial accountability.

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.” Local boards of education exercise this governance authority in compliance with state and federal laws and in conjunction with the State Board of Education, which adopts statewide regulations and policies in accordance with state and federal statutory authority.

Each local board plays a vital role in governing the local school system and engaging local communities and promoting participation by parents and other community members in the education process. Local boards are the primary advocates for local, state and federal funding to support the teaching and learning of students and efficient and effective school system administration. Through MABE’s board development program and other professional development activities, each board is striving to continuously improve its ability to govern in a manner that best meets the needs of all students in the local school system.

Local governance authority of boards of education in Maryland and throughout the nation is often challenged by state, federal and private sector initiatives. In Maryland, when state initiatives impose new requirements on local school systems, the legislature and State Board have typically engaged in collaborative development and implementation of new programs and services. MABE appreciates the strong historical record of the General Assembly and State Board’s recognition and support for the governance role of local boards.

In 2016, the Governor issued executive orders intruding upon the education policymaking authority of the State Board of Education and all local boards regarding the local board adoption of school year calendars and the State Board’s waiver criteria. MABE believes the education policymaking roles of the State Board and local boards should be preserved, and that executive and legislative initiatives should be developed and implemented collaboratively.

MABE is participating in the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and State Accountability Plan, and on the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education and Knott Commission on 21st Century School Facilities, to ensure the continued governance role of local boards in making educational policy and resource allocation decisions in the best interests of students.

For additional information, see [MABE’s Resolution on Local Board Governance Authority](#).