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Welcome to the "Education Advocate"

We are pleased to be launching the first edition of the *Education Advocate*, the re-branded legislative newsletter formerly known and loved as the *GreenSheet*. The *Education Advocate* will provide timely and useful information throughout the 2018 legislative session on all pending legislation and budget deliberations, along with "calls to action" to contact legislators on priority bills.

MABE's 2018 Legislative Priorities & Positions

On October 4, 2017, at MABE's Annual Conference, local board members approved [Continuing Resolutions for 2017-2018](#). In November 2017, MABE's Legislative Committee adopted the [2018 Legislative Positions and Priorities](#). These principles and priorities direct MABE's positions on bills introduced during the legislative session, and regulatory and policy issues arising throughout the year.

In addition to adopting specific [legislative priorities for 2018](#), MABE has adopted legislative position statements on the following major policy issues:

LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION GOVERNANCE

MABE 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. [Read more ...](#)

STATE EDUCATION FUNDING

MABE supports increased funding for all students and targeted increases for prekindergarten, English learners, low-income students, and students receiving special education services, and supports legislative and funding recommendations consistent with updating and enhancing Maryland's nationally recognized standards-based school finance system. [Read more ...](#)

2018 Legislative Committee Calendar

- Jan. 22, 2018 – Budget Highlights, Bill Status & Positions
- Jan. 23, 2018 – MABE briefing before the House Ways and Means Committee (2:00 p.m.)
- Feb. 12, 2018 – Bill Status & Positions
- Feb. 20, 2018 – MABE Legislative Day Luncheon
- Feb. 26, 2018 – Bill Status & Positions
- Mar. 12, 2018 – Bill Status & Positions
- Mar. 26, 2018 – Bill Status & Positions
- Apr. 23, 2018 – 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](#).

SCHOOL FACILITIES FUNDING

MABE supports a state funding level of at least \$350 million for school construction and renovation projects for FY 2019 to provide the State's share of approved projects to build, renovate, and improve schools. [Read more ...](#)

LOCAL FUNDING & MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT

MABE supports reasonable growth in local funding based on inflation and other factors, and to provide supplemental per pupil funding for prekindergarten, English learners, low-income students, and students receiving special education services. [Read more ...](#)

UNFUNDED MANDATES

MABE opposes legislation and state regulations which would impose any new unfunded or underfunded mandate on local school systems. [Read more ...](#)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

MABE supports increased state and federal funding and resources to support high quality special education programs and services, and opposes legislation to provide unilateral parental consent conditions, or shift the burden of proof, in special education decisions and disputes including IEP meetings and due process hearings. [Read more ...](#)

CHARTER SCHOOLS

MABE supports local control and authority over public schools, including public charter schools, and supported passage of the Public Charter School Act of 2003, and secured amendments to the Charter School Improvement Act of 2015, to ensure that Maryland's charter school law is aligned with this principle. [Read more ...](#)

VOUCHERS & PUBLIC FUNDING FOR NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

MABE supports strong public accountability measures for every public dollar spent, including public dollars dedicated or diverted to private and parochial schools, and supports the repeal of the BOOST private school voucher program. [Read more ...](#)

TESTING AND CURRICULUM

MABE supports local decision-making authority in developing curriculum, assessments, and instructional programs in conjunction with the State Board of Education, and supports adequate state funding to support mandated assessment programs. [Read more ...](#)

SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY

MABE supports local discretion to adopt programs and policies to maintain and improve school safety and security, and supports increased state and local funding for programs addressing gangs, drugs, human trafficking and the impact of systemic violence in communities, schools, and our students' lives. [Read more ...](#)

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

MABE supports local flexibility to create and enforce consistent and fair disciplinary standards in order to respond to infractions of the rules committed by individual students, and increased state and local funding and resources to support restorative justice programs. [Read more ...](#)

STUDENT HEALTH, NUTRITION & FITNESS

MABE supports local board discretion to adopt policies and allocate resources to support improvements in student behavioral and physical health and fitness, and funding and policy decisions to strengthen school meal programs. [Read more ...](#)

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS & COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

MABE opposes “grounds for discipline” legislation to remove the authority of local boards to hear appeals in employee discipline cases. [Read more ...](#)

FEDERAL FUNDING & POLICY

MABE supports federal policy and regulations and increased federal funding consistent with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which provides more state and local board of education flexibility in crafting student, school and school system accountability systems. [Read more ...](#)

Kirwan Commission

The Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education has been meeting since the fall of 2016 to develop recommendations for updating the state’s education funding formulas. The Commission has reviewed the findings of a comprehensive funding study, conducted by Augenblick, Palaich & Associates (APA) in 2015-2016 at the cost of over \$1 million, which recommended significant reforms and increases in state and local school funding in its [Final Report](#) of the Study of Adequacy of Funding for Education in Maryland. However, the Commission has not devoted much time to considering legislative and funding recommendations aligned with the final APA study, and instead has organized its work around the framework and advice of another consultant, the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE).

The Commission met on Dec. 20, 2017 to adopt the policy recommendations to be included in its preliminary report. A final report, with specific funding recommendations aligned with the Commission’s policy recommendations (with the costing-out study to be done by APA), is not due until later in 2018. Following a meeting on January 8, 2018, these recommendations, and many more (see the [draft recommendations](#)), will be finalized and included in a forthcoming preliminary report. [Read more ...](#)

Knott Commission

Two years ago the Senate President and Speaker of the House formed a commission to review the State’s school construction policies and make recommendations for more efficient and effective school construction practices into the future. The 21st Century School Facilities Commission, chaired by Martin Knott, President of Knott Mechanical, has now concluded its work and adopted a wide array of funding and policy recommendations.

On December 14, 2017, the Knott Commission adopted final recommendations. The Commission considered and approved, with only minor changes, all of the recommendations developed by

the [Subcommittee on Funding](#) and the [Subcommittee on Process, Procedures, and Educational Specifications](#). In addition, the Commission adopted several [alternative recommendations](#).

Overall, MABE is quite pleased with the adopted recommendations. Key recommendations include conducting a statewide facility assessment using a uniform integrated data system, and continually updating these assessments. The Commission also recommends that the State's short-term funding goal should be at least \$345 million, but increased to \$400 million after FY 2019, and ultimately determined by the results of the facility needs assessment which may result in a higher goal. [Read more...](#)

Earned Sick Leave Bill to be First Order of Business

Substitute teachers for substitute teachers? The soon to be voted on veto override for House Bill 1 from 2017, the Healthy Working Families Act, could make this a new reality for local school systems. The legislation, which passed late in the 2017 legislative session but was then vetoed by Governor Hogan, would set thresholds for hours and days worked which then trigger requirements for employers to calculate and provide paid sick leave to even part-time employees.

For local school systems, the vast majority of employees work on a full-time basis and/or are covered by collectively bargained union agreements and already earn paid sick leave. Therefore, the brunt of the impact of this law would be the mandate to manage and pay for newly mandated leave benefits program for substitute teachers and other daily "as available" employees such as substitute bus drivers.

What school systems are asking: There is a section of the bill that already exempts daily substitute employees, but only in the "health or human services industry." A logical extension of this exemption would be to similarly exclude boards of education. This exemption would only be for those school employees who: are called to work on an as-needed basis, can reject or accept the shift offered, and are not guaranteed to be called on to work. These conditions are already in the law.

If the legislature votes to override the veto at the outset of 2018 session, HB 1 would become law 30 days later, and therefore separate legislation would be needed to address MABE's concern. [Read more ...](#)

Grounds for Employee Discipline Bill

In 2018, MABE anticipates opposing legislation, which has been introduced for the past two legislative sessions and strongly supported by the teachers unions, to remove the authority to discipline employees from the local board of education and transfer it to an arbitrator if requested by the employee. [Read more ...](#)

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