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First Week of Session Highlights

The opening week of the 2018 legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly included a press conference at which Governor Hogan announced two new education legislative initiatives and the passage by veto override of the Healthy Working Families Act. MABE responded immediately to the Governor's initiatives, and will continue to make the case for reasonable amendments to the earned sick leave bill to address school system concerns.

Earned Sick Leave Bill Passes

On Friday, Jan. 12, 2018 the legislature voted to override the Governor's veto of House Bill 1 from 2017, the Healthy Working Families Act. Prior to passage in 2017, MABE had advocated for an amendment to address the concerns of local school systems regarding the new mandate to provide earned sick leave to daily on-call employees such as substitute teachers. However, a bill passing as a veto override cannot be amended. Therefore, in the 2018 session this request will need to be pursued through separate legislation. As a bill passed by veto override, the new law will take effect 30 days following passage, which will be on February 11, 2018. Again, MABE will continue to advocate for a narrowly crafted amendment to the new law.

[Read more ...](#)

MABE Responds to Governor Hogan Announcement of Major Legislative Initiatives on School System Accountability

On January 8, 2018, Governor Larry Hogan held a press conference and issued a [press release](#) to announce that he will release \$2.5 million for emergency repairs in Baltimore City Schools, and also announced that he will introduce two major

Legislative Committee Calendar

- Jan. 22, 2018 – Budget Highlights, Bill Status & Positions
- Jan. 22, 2018 – FRN Committee – 12:30 -2:00
- *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](#).

MABE Advocacy Resources

- [The Education Advocate & Calls to Action](#)
- [Bill Testimony, Hearing Schedules, and more on the 2018 Legislative Session](#)
- [Background & Positions on Priority Issues and MABE's Committees on Funding and ESSA](#)
- [Legislative Committee](#)

education reform bills. One bill would rewrite the 2017 Protect Our Schools Act to, in part, increase the role of student test results in determining school performance (from 65% to 80%). A second bill, the Education Accountability Act, would create a state-level inspector general within the Maryland State Dept. of Education to take complaints on matters ranging from school facility conditions to school finance, procurement, and ethics.

(Press Conference video on [Facebook](#) and on [Twitter](#).)

The Governor announced that he will introduce the Accountability in Education Act of 2018 to create an Office of the State Education Investigator General, which will be an independent unit within the Maryland State Department of Education. The Investigator General will be selected by a commission consisting of appointees by the Senate President, Speaker of the House, and the governor, and will be charged with investigating complaints of unethical, unprofessional, or illegal conduct relating to procurement, education assets, graduation requirements, grading, education facilities, and school budgets.

In addition, the Governor announced that he will submit emergency legislation, the Protect Our Students Act of 2018, to require academic performance to be counted as 80 percent of a school's composite score, aligning Maryland with the national average. This bill would be in direct response to the Protect Our Schools Act passed in 2017, which governed much of the drafting of Maryland's state accountability plan under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

MABE Perspectives on Accountability

- The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, supports strong accountability for school systems regarding student achievement and success on state tests and standards; and accountability for managing taxpayer dollars in the best interests of the students.
- MABE believes the accountability systems for student performance, financial management, and school system operations are working well.
- Therefore, MABE questions the need for an "investigator general" as proposed by the Governor's recently announced Accountability in Education Act.
- MABE supported with amendments the 2017 Protect Our Schools Act, believing it struck a balance between accountability measures consistent with federal law, and protected schools from privatization and other "top down" state actions.
- Therefore, MABE questions the need for any radical reform of this law.

[Read more ...](#)

School Buses as Interstate Commercial Vehicles

[Senate Bill 44](#) would require all school buses to comply with federal regulations intended for commercial interstate motor carriers. This is not the intent of these federal regulations, which explicitly exempt school buses unless they are, in fact, used as interstate commercial vehicles for hire. Local boards and school systems maintain a strong commitment to student safety and believe that current school bus design and safety requirements already achieve a very high safety standard. MABE opposes this bill based on the comprehensive coverage of federal, state and local laws, regulations and practices to ensure that school buses remain the safest mode of transportation for our students. The bill hearing is on January 17 at 1:00 in the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Briefing Schedule Highlights

- January 16, at 1:00 p.m. – Briefing with the Appropriations and Ways & Means committee by Dr. William "Brit" Kirwan on the Progress of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education – Joint Hearing Room (DLS Bldg.)
- January 16, at 3:00 p.m. – Briefing with the Budget & Taxation and Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee by Dr. William "Brit" Kirwan on the Progress of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education - 3 West Miller Senate Building
- January 17, at 2:00 p.m. – Budget & Taxation Committee Briefing on the Maryland Longitudinal Data System
- January 22, at 1:00 p.m. – Ways & Means Committee Briefing on the Knott Commission
- January 22, at 2:00 p.m. – Budget & Taxation Committee Briefing on the Knott Commission
- January 22, at 3:00 p.m. – House Appropriations and Senate Budget & Taxation Committee Fiscal Briefing by the Dept. of Legislative Services – Joint Hearing Room (DLS Bldg.)

- **On January 23, at 2:00 MABE will brief the House Ways and Means Committee**
Briefings by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), the Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), and the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA)

Hearing Schedule Highlights (Link to full [bill hearing schedule](#))

Bill Number	Title	Hearing	MABE Position
SB0043	High School Diploma by Examination - Eligibility Requirements - Exemption	Hearing 1/16 at 1:30 p.m. (FIN)	Support
HB0010	State Lottery - Unclaimed Prizes - Public Prekindergarten Programs	Hearing 1/17 at 1:00 p.m. (W&M)	Support
SB0044	Vehicle Laws - School Buses - Inspection, Repair, and Maintenance Requirements	Hearing 1/17 at 1:00 p.m. (EHEA)	Oppose

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