

Student Health and Fitness

(Adopted 2013; amended 2016, 2017)

WHEREAS, local boards of education are committed to providing school facilities, school meals, and programs of instruction designed to promote the physical and mental health and fitness of students and to prepare them to maintain a healthy lifestyle as adults; and

WHEREAS, federal and state standards for student health and fitness, especially regarding nutrition, continue to be reformed and enhanced to address the alarming national epidemics of juvenile diabetes and obesity; and

WHEREAS, local boards of education are committed to providing quality physical education programs in Maryland's public schools within the current State and federal statutory and regulatory framework; and

WHEREAS, regulations require that physical education programs provide an "individualized, developmentally appropriate, and personally challenging instructional program that advances the student's knowledge, confidence, skills, and motivation to engage successfully in a lifelong healthy and active lifestyle" (COMAR 13A.04.13.01); and

WHEREAS, State Board regulations require yearly physical education instruction for all students in grades kindergarten through 8, and elective classes for students in grades 9 through 12; and

WHEREAS, COMAR also requires each school system to develop physical education curriculum guides for the elementary and secondary schools under its jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, federal requirements are playing an increasing role in State and local education policy, including physical education and school nutrition; and

WHEREAS, the 2004 Child Nutrition and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act required all local school districts to put "wellness" programs in place by the beginning of the 2006-07 school year; required school districts to appoint wellness councils responsible for developing plans to address the types of food sold in schools, physical education, and nutrition. School districts are also required to appoint monitoring officers to ensure compliance; and

WHEREAS, the 2010 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, entitled the "The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act", mandated major reforms in school meal programs to improve the nutritional value of the meals served to Maryland students each day; and

WHEREAS, child hunger impacts many students as an obstacle to learning and therefore school systems are increasingly involved in summer and weekend meal programs and partnerships to help ensure daily access to healthy food for all students; and

WHEREAS, Maryland has enacted legislation to allow eligible school systems to use the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program to provide free school meals to all students in a school system or school based on rates of free and reduced price meal (FRPM) eligibility, while also reducing administrative paperwork and personnel hours; and

WHEREAS, in 2017 legislation was enacted to extend the CEP program and to enhance high school

student access to free school meals; and

WHEREAS, in 2017 legislation was enacted to require a needs assessment of student school-based behavioral health services; and to develop best practices for local boards of education to provide to students (1) behavioral needs assessments and (2) individualized or group behavioral health counseling services with a health care provider through a school-based health center or community-partnered school-based behavioral health services; and

WHEREAS, in 2017 legislation was enacted to require annual training of all certificated school personnel who have direct contact with students on a regular basis to complete training by December 1 each year in the skills required to (1) understand and respond to youth suicide risk and (2) identify professional resources to help students in crisis; and

WHEREAS, in 2017 legislation was enacted to require school systems to respond to the opioid and heroin abuse crisis by (1) expanding the existing drug addiction and prevention education curriculum to include a unit on opioids and heroin; (2) requiring local boards to establish a policy requiring each public school to store naloxone and authorize school personnel to administer it; and (3) requiring local boards or local health departments to hire a county or regional community action official or existing personnel to coordinate public outreach including school-based community forums; and

WHEREAS, Governor Hogan's Executive Order establishing a compressed school year beginning after Labor Day and ending by June 15 has created a greater need for school systems to provide meals for students during the extended summer break; and

WHEREAS, many legislative proposals intended to enhance student health and fitness would impose significant costs on local school systems;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that MABE supports local board discretion to adopt policies and to allocate resources to support improvements in student mental and physical health, fitness, and nutrition; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE supports state and federal laws to preserve and enhance the ability of local school systems to choose to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program as an option to provide free school meals to all students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE will work collaboratively with stakeholders in urging the Governor and General Assembly to increase funding for school nutrition programs to support summer meal programs for students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE opposes state or local government unilateral determination of the methods of delivering student health services, including the employment status of school health providers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE opposes the unfunded mandating of additional physical, mental, and behavioral health services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE opposes the unfunded mandating of increased physical education instruction which would impose significant costs for additional school facilities and instructional staff; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE opposes the unfunded mandating of additional requirements for school-based nutritional programs.