

January 25, 2019

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School Calendar Flexibility Bills - Hearing on Jan. 30th

MABE greatly appreciates that Senators Paul Pinsky (Chair of the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee) and Nancy King (Chair of the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee) have introduced [Senate Bill 128](#) which includes the following, straightforward, provision:
“NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW ... EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL SET THE START DATE AND END DATE OF THE SCHOOL YEAR FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTY EACH YEAR.”

Another important school calendar flexibility bill, sponsored by Senator Nancy King, is [Senate Bill 131](#). This bill is narrower in focus, but would correct the confusion over a similar bill passed in 2018. Senate Bill 131 clearly states that: “A COUNTY BOARD MAY EXTEND THE LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL YEAR FOR ANY REASON FOR UP TO 5 SCHOOL DAYS BEYOND JUNE 15 WITHOUT APPROVAL FROM THE STATE BOARD OR ANY OTHER ENTITY.”

Board members are welcome to come to Annapolis on Wednesday, January 30th to attend the committee bill hearings to demonstrate support for these local calendar flexibility bills.

These bills represents one of MABE’s top legislative priorities for the 2019 session regarding local board governance authority. MABE looks forward to supporting and securing passage of both bills. But to be clear, Senate Bill 128 would guarantee that each local board could adopt its own annual school calendar, from start to finish. Therefore, the following talking points are focused on Senate Bill 128.

Board members are encouraged to contact all Senators, and specifically members of the Senate Education Committee, in support of the passage of Senate Bill 128.

Talking Points are provided below.

**Legislative Committee
2019 Calendar**

- Feb. 4, 2019
 - FYI – ***MABE’s Legislative Day in Annapolis is February 21, 2019***
- Feb. 25, 2019
- March 11, 2019
- March 25, 2019
 - FYI – The 2019 legislative session ends at midnight on April 8, 2019
- April 29, 2019

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](#).

More information on the history of the Governor’s 2016 Executive Order mandating a Post-Labor Day start date is available on the [MABE website](#).

Talking Points:

- ***I urge the Senator to support Senate Bill 128 to allow each school system to set the start date and end date of the annual school calendar.***
- ***Local boards are responsible for adopting school calendars that represent the priorities and needs of my local school system, including the interests of students, parents, teachers, and the entire community.***
- ***For example, next year, in 2020, Labor Day is on September 7. This would delay the start of the school year until September 8. Adopting September 8, 2020 as the first day of school should be the decision of each local board, and local communities, not the State.***
- ***Each local board of education is accountable to its own community on so many major policy issues, such as approving operating and capital budgets and redistricting plans.***
- ***I firmly believe that local boards should be trusted to adopt their own annual school calendars. This is why I am urging your support for Senate Bill 128.***

Link to [Witness Guidelines and Committee FAQs](#) for the Senate Education Committee.

- Witnesses should bring 25 copies of their written testimony to the Committee offices by 12:00 Noon on the day the bill is scheduled to be heard in the Committee.
- Witnesses must sign-up in person by 12:00 Noon on the day the bill hearing.
- Witness sign-up is available by 9:00 a.m. the morning of the scheduled hearing. Touch screen witness sign-up monitors are mounted on walls to the left as you enter the foyer area of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, located at 2W, Miller Senate Office Building, 11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD.
- Witnesses have up to 2 minutes to provide testimony about a bill.

Links to contacts for the Senate Education Committee:

Full Committee	Contact
Pinsky, Paul G. (Chair)	
Nathan-Pulliam, Shirley (Vice Chair)	
Bailey, Jack	
Carozza, Mary Beth	
Ellis, Arthur	
Gallion, Jason C.	
Kagan, Cheryl C.	
Lam, Clarence K.	
Patterson, Obie	
Simonaire, Bryan W.	
Young, Ronald N.	

[Link to contacts for all Senators](#)

MABE Briefs Senate Education Committee

On January 24, MABE's Legislative Committee Chair, Julie Hummer, briefed the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee on MABE's legislative priorities and positions for the 2019 session. The briefing of educational stakeholders also included presentations from the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland (PSSAM), the ACLU of Maryland, the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) and the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU).

As Legislative Committee Chair, Julie Hummer outlined MABE's priorities on major funding and policy issues. She began by emphasizing MABE's support for continued governance autonomy for local boards of education to set education policy and school budgets; including support for enhanced local school board calendar flexibility. She specifically thanked Senator Pinsky for introducing Senate Bill 128, described above.

In addition, MABE's presentation highlighted the following priorities:

- Support for at least \$400 million in State funding for school construction and renovation projects.
- Support for increased funding for all students and targeted increases for prekindergarten, English learners, low-income students, and students receiving special education services.
- Support for increased funding for public education in the FY 2020 and FY 2021 State Budgets, including the investment of the \$200 million set aside last year, and full phase-in of dedicated gaming revenue in the Education Trust Fund.

MABE's presentation immediately followed a lengthy briefing by Dr. Brit Kirwan on the Kirwan Commission's work, including a detailed outline of its forthcoming interim report. Regarding the Kirwan Commission, Ms. Hummer shared MABE's support for the funding recommendations, including funding for enhanced CTE programs and significant increases in staffing levels and teacher pay.

However, MABE opposes any Kirwan Commission recommendation or legislation to reduce or eliminate the governance and decision-making authority of local boards as a condition for receiving increased state funding. Local boards are committed to investing meaningful increases in state and local funding in accordance with new, more rigorous master plans, and to closing achievement and opportunity gaps to the maximum extent within our control.

MABE also highlighted the issue of school safety, and that for each local board, safety and security in public schools is extremely important for the protection of students and staff, as well as necessary to providing environments conducive to teaching and learning. Last year's tragic school led to broad bipartisan support for the Safe to Learn Act of 2018. MABE believes this Act provides a strong framework for ensuring high quality school safety programs, behavioral health coordination, school resource officer training, and facility evaluations and improvements to make all schools safer for all students.

MABE's [2019 Legislative Positions](#) and [Briefing Presentation to the Senate Education Committee](#) are available on MABE's website.

MABE on Capitol Hill

The 2019 Advocacy Institute will be held from January 27-29, 2019 at the Washington Hilton Hotel. Several representatives from MABE's Federal Relations Network Committee, chaired by Karin Bailey (St. Mary's County), will be attending the conference and visiting with members of congress on Tuesday, January 29th.

Check out the [Agenda](#) and stay tuned for reports on MABE's participation in FRN and the Advocacy Institute.

Priority Issue - [Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) and [IDEA Position Statement for Members of Congress](#)

Resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MABE's Annapolis Advocacy Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Assembly
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MABE's State Board Advocacy Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State Board of Education/MSDE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MABE's Federal Advocacy Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSBA Advocacy

For more information, contact John R. Woolums, Esq., MABE's Director of Governmental Relations, at jwoolums@mabe.org or 410-841-5414.

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