

BILL: Senate Bill 661
TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education - Community Schools - Established
POSITION: OPPOSE
DATE: March 6, 2019
COMMITTEES: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 661, because it would prematurely establish standards and requirements for community schools in advance of the implementation of the funding and policy recommendations of the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education.

The Kirwan Commission is recommending that more resources be directed to the students who need it the most, including through the expansion of community schools. First, the Commission is recommending adding a concentrated poverty weight to the funding formula to support intensive services, for students and their families to enable them to succeed in school, that are coordinated and able to meet the additional needs of students in schools located in distressed communities. Second, the Commission is recommending adding fixed, categorical funding amounts for each school with concentrated poverty to be used to (1) establish or enhance community schools and (2) establish or enhance school health and behavioral services.

Specifically, a fixed amount would be provided for each school that meets the 55% threshold of students living in poverty. This fixed funding is to be used to provide a community schools coordinator and a health services practitioner, who may work under a school health services program, school-based health center, or community-partnered school behavioral health services program. In addition to this fixed amount of funding, there will be an additional per pupil amount for each student enrolled at the school.

This per pupil funding (in combination with the per pupil funding enhancements provided through the compensatory education funding formula) will be used to provide programs and services identified in a school's needs assessment. Examples of such services include:

- Additional extended learning time including before and after school, summer, and extended school year;
- Additional social workers, counselors, psychologists, and restorative practice coaches;
- Vision and dental care services, and physical wellness including providing food for in-school and out-of-school time and linkages to community providers;
- Behavioral health services such as mental health practitioners and providing professional development to provide trauma-informed interventions;
- Family and community engagement and supports including informing parents of academic course offerings, opportunities for children, and available social services as well as educating families on how to monitor a child's learning;

MABE supports these recommendations and initiatives, which are described in much greater detail in the section of the Commission's report attached to this testimony. However, without the provision of the significant funding needed to establish community schools, MABE cannot support codifying the program standards and timeline contained in this bill.

For the reasons outlined above, MABE respectfully requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 661.