

**Martha James-Hassan, MABE President**

**Statement to the Joint Hearing on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future**

**Senate Bill 1000 and House Bill 1300**

**February 17, 2020**

I am Martha James-Hassan, MABE President, and a member of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners. The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, appreciates this opportunity to voice our strong support for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation. We look forward to this bill's passage in the coming weeks, and to the transformational impact over the next decade on the education of Maryland's nearly 1 million public school students.

MABE fully endorses the Blueprint's focus on policy and funding reforms in the following major policy areas:

- The equitable expansion of high-quality early childhood education programs;
- Continuous improvement in teacher pay, preparation, and classroom supports, and a much more diverse workforce of teachers and principals;
- Access for each student in every school to college and career readiness pathways; and
- The significant increase in state and local resources needed to ensure that each and every student is afforded genuine, sustained opportunities to succeed.

MABE views the Blueprint for Maryland's Future as a "Call to Action" for the building of a world class education system in Maryland. This legislation also represents a long-overdue updating of the State's school finance system in order to fulfill the Maryland's constitutional education funding imperative. The Maryland State Constitution requires the General Assembly to: "establish throughout the State a thorough and efficient system of free public schools; and shall provide by taxation or otherwise for their maintenance." Maryland's courts have, through the years, updated their interpretation of this language. In 2002, the State agreed to uphold its constitutional duty by enacting the Bridge to Excellence Act.

Today, Maryland is poised to reaffirm this constitutional duty to our students by enacting and fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

**Julie Hummer, MABE Legislative Committee Chair**  
**Statement to the Joint Hearing on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future**  
**Senate Bill 1000 and House Bill 1300**  
**February 17, 2020**

I am Julie Hummer, Chair of MABE's Legislative Committee, and a member of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education.

Passing the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is MABE's top legislative priority in the 2020 session. Local boards of education, through MABE, led the advocacy effort to create the Kirwan Commission in Innovation and Excellence precisely so that an updated adequacy study and other funding and accountability issues could be debated and transformed into legislation to update and improve Maryland's school finance system.

Throughout the years of reviewing funding adequacy studies and hearing from consultants on other countries' education systems, MABE has always articulated a clear message in support of a balanced approach to significantly increasing state and local funding, adopting policy reforms and the new school finance procedures aligned with these reforms, and enhancing shared responsibility and accountability for student learning outcomes. MABE believes that the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation strikes such a balance in many areas. However, MABE has also identified several technical and structural issues we believe need to be addressed.

MABE will be seeking amendments to this legislation, largely to clarify several timelines and procedures, and therefore more technical in nature. However, MABE is also concerned about the structure of the bill in areas of school finance and performance accountability, bill provisions that we believe do not adequately reflect the role of local boards in governing local school systems.

Again, passage of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is MABE's top legislative priority in the 2020 session. We look forward to working with the four committees here today, and the entire General Assembly, to enact and fully fund a comprehensive, sustainable, and balanced approach to achieving the improved outcomes for students we all seek.

**Mavis Ellis, MABE Board of Directors Member and Legislative Committee Vice-Chair**

**Statement to the Joint Hearing on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future**

**Senate Bill 1000 and House Bill 1300**

**February 17, 2020**

I am Mavis Ellis, President of the Howard County Board of Education, vice-chair of MABE's Legislative Committee, and a member MABE's Board of Directors.

Equity, in funding and educational policies and programs, is a top priority for MABE and the local boards we represent. For MABE, educational equity means providing access to essential academic, social, emotional, and economic supports in order to engage each student in rigorous instruction with appropriate educational resources to achieve their highest potential.

Funding equity is necessary to support educational equity, and clear and formal requirements for state and local investments in programs, schools and students are needed to ensure that both of these equity outcomes are achieved. This is why MABE so strongly supports increasing funding for all students, but even more so for students learning English, receiving special education services, from economically disadvantaged households and communities, and our struggling learners.

For the same reason, MABE supports adding the concentrated poverty funding formula to support intensive, coordinated services for students and their families to enable them to succeed in school.

Lastly, MABE strongly endorses the Blueprint's assurance that local governments pay a local share of per pupil funding for our economically disadvantaged students, students receiving special education services, and students learning English. This commitment is essential if we are to "close the gaps" by providing an equitable local share of per pupil funding for these students who need a strong, shared investment of state and local dollars the most.

Thank you for your leadership and support for Maryland's public schools and the equitable reforms contained in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation.

**Cheryl Pasteur, Member of MABE's Legislative Committee and  
Ad Hoc Committee on Funding**

**Statement to the Joint Hearing on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future**

**Senate Bill 1000 and House Bill 1300**

**February 17, 2020**

I am Cheryl Pasteur, a member of the Baltimore County Board of Education, a member of MABE's Legislative Committee and Ad Hoc Committee on Funding, and a member of the Kirwan Commission's Funding Workgroup.

MABE was honored to be represented on the Commission by former MABE President Joy Schaefer, and I was honored to serve on the Commission's Funding Workgroup. MABE has participated fully in the Commission's work, and consistently supported increasing the State's investment in a high performing and innovative statewide system of public schools. The increases in funding proposed in this legislation are substantial, and must be, if we are to achieve the goal of improving our schools so that our students are as well prepared as students educated in the highest performing school systems in the world.

The substantial investment being called for is raising the question, "Is Kirwan affordable?" The answer is "Yes!" The Sage Policy Group's return on investment analysis confirms that investing in education is money well spent. Better educated workers are higher paid and therefore higher tax-paying citizens, and they are citizens who place fewer and lower demands on state funding for social services. The return on investment study also concludes, that by the time our babies in prekindergarten today are entering the workforce of tomorrow, the entire program will have paid for itself.

This is how economists analyze this legislation, and they see very predictable and very positive outcomes for our State's economy. As a career educator, I want to emphasize that these positive outcomes are rooted in the transformational power of public education to improve the quality of life for our children, families, and communities.

Therefore, the real question – and the true challenge for our state, its citizens, and the state's political leadership – is where are we going to be as a state if we fail to not only launch, but also sustain, our commitment to fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future in the years ahead.

**BILL:** Senate Bill 1000 and House Bill 1300  
**TITLE:** Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation  
**DATE:** February 17, 2020  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS  
**COMMITTEES:** Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
House Ways and Means Committee  
House Appropriations Committee  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, supports the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation (Senate Bill 1000/House Bill 1300) to launch 10 years of continuous improvement and innovation in the delivery of elementary and secondary education in Maryland's public schools. Our nearly 1 million public school students deserve nothing less.

MABE led the advocacy effort to create the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education precisely so that an updated adequacy study and other funding and accountability issues could be debated and transformed into legislation to update and improve Maryland's school finance system. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act represents the culmination of these efforts.

MABE views the Kirwan Commission's recommendations and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future as a "Call to Action" for the building of a world class education system in Maryland. MABE supports the focus on policy and funding recommendations in the following major policy areas, to ensure that each student is provided with:

- High-quality early childhood education programs;
- High-quality and diverse teachers and principals;
- Access to college and career readiness pathways (including advanced college prep programs and career and technical education that leads to employment); and
- The significant additional state and local resources needed to ensure that each and every student is afforded every opportunity to succeed.

MABE believes that significant funding increases and policy reforms are needed to support equitable access for all students to an excellent education. MABE also believes that local boards must be at the helm, fulfilling the responsibility to govern school systems in the best interests of all students, and that the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act must be consistent with the principle of adequately funding educational programs and preserving the role of local board governance. In this context, MABE is requesting amendments to the bill as introduced to ensure that the final bill is much more aligned with these same principles.

Maryland must renew its commitment to fulfilling its constitutional mandate to fully and equitably fund an excellent education for each of Maryland's nearly 1 million public school students. MABE is confident that this legislation can achieve these goals. For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation, with amendments to ensure a smooth transition to new fiscal and academic reporting requirements and to adopt accountability measures that better reflect the governance authority of local boards of education.