

June 29, 2020

Statement in Opposition to the Governor's Proposal to cut more Than \$300 million in Education Funding for the Coming School Year

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all 24 local boards in the State, strongly opposes the deep cuts to state funding for public schools that Governor Hogan is proposing for Board of Public Works approval on July 1, 2020.

The Governor will as be asking Comptroller Peter Franchot and Treasurer Nancy Kopp to agree to immediate cuts to the State Department of Education, cuts to grants to local governments for teacher retirement costs, cuts to disparity grants for less wealthy jurisdictions, and cuts to funding for schools in critical need of heating and air conditioning upgrades. These cuts are all on the chopping block for the July 1 meeting, and MABE is urging the Board of Public Works to reject or at least reduce the impact of the more than \$100 million in departmental and program cuts.

The Governor has also informed the Board of Public Works of his proposal to cut \$200 million in the State's education budget for this coming school year. This action would need to be approved by the Legislature it reconvenes, whether in a special session or in the regular session in January of 2021.

MABE is alarmed because these cuts would undermine our schools' ability to provide special education services, support for public and private prekindergarten programs, tutoring, teacher pay, and wraparound services in high poverty schools. Marylander's overwhelmingly approved a Constitutional amendment just two years ago to ensure we add to, not subtract from, these very programs and services.

The Governor's proposed cuts, following on the heels of his veto in May of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act, would make real progress on behalf of our nearly 1 million students nearly impossible.

Fortunately, the Governor's proposed \$200 million cut cannot occur without the General Assembly's approval. Maryland's State Constitution and laws protect most school funding from mid-year cuts by the Board of Public Works. Unfortunately, the Governor already is proposing to eliminate any increase in State education funding over the prior year, an across-the-board cut that would make it extremely difficult to carry out COVID-19 education recovery plans and return students and staff safely to school this fall.

The State's COVID-19 Education Recovery Plan makes clear that more, not fewer, resources will be needed to make up for the lost learning time of our students and keep all students on their college and career ready paths. School boards and superintendents are responsibly planning to meet students' needs with a renewed focus on equitably meeting each student's needs, including the social-emotional needs of students traumatized by this public health and economic crisis. Schools are preparing to roll out in-person classroom instruction (with many new and costly public health restrictions) and ongoing digital and distance learning (going well beyond the emergency continuity of learning efforts which closed out this school year).

COVID-19 is demanding new and unbudgeted expenses in every school system, expenses which cannot be avoided if we are to maintain safe schools for students and staff. Such costs include expanded school meal programs, digital learning equipment including laptops and WiFi connections, safety measures including disinfecting equipment, cleaning supplies, masks, thermometers, air filters, and more.

Local boards of education simply cannot afford to meet the educational needs of students, and fund the many COVID-19 related costs, if the State pulls back from its Constitutional mandate to adequately fund public education in the 2020-2021 school year. MABE recognizes that “adequate funding” was not previously defined to include many of these costs, but today it must be. Maryland must step up and fully fund the types of educational and operational programs and services essential to truly recovering our students’ education futures.

MABE urges Marylanders to contact the Board of Public Works and their State Delegates and Senators to speak up in opposition to the more than \$100 million in education-related cuts proposed for approval by the Board of Public Works on July 1st, and the Governor’s proposal to cut another \$200 million in school funding for the coming school year.

Contact: Jackie Weisman, jweisman@mabe.org

#####

Founded in 1957, the Maryland Association of Boards of Education is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to serving and supporting boards of education in Maryland. MABE is a leading advocate for public education in the state. All 24 Maryland boards of education are members of MABE.

Maryland Association of Boards of Education
621 Ridgely Avenue, Suite 300, Annapolis, MD 21401-1112
410.841.5414 – 800.841.8197
www.mabe.org

#####

Founded in 1957, the Maryland Association of Boards of Education is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to serving and supporting boards of education in Maryland. MABE is a leading advocate for public education in the state. All 24 Maryland boards of education are members of MABE.

Maryland Association of Boards of Education
621 Ridgely Avenue, Suite 300, Annapolis, MD 21401-1112
410.841.5414 – 800.841.8197
www.mabe.org