

**Julie Hummer, MABE Legislative Committee Chair**  
**Statement to the House Ways and Means and Appropriations Committee**  
**Briefing on Education Issues Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic**  
**June 11, 2020**

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

The economic crisis resulting from the COVID-19 public health crisis is driving forecasts of staggering amounts of lost state and local revenue for public education. Maryland's 24 local school systems are fiscally dependent on federal, State and local funding through mandated formulas, grants, and the local maintenance of effort requirement. This is the bedrock on which our programs and payrolls are built.

Limited federal funding has been provided but much more will be needed until state and local revenues return. Costs arising from unexpected demands for student meal services, educational technology and connectivity, and personnel are being met, but these costs are not sustainable. There is simply not enough funding to support either a total distance learning system, or a blended system of distance learning and returning to school. One major reason for this is that we know that distance learning is not perfectly accessible, or as effective as classroom instruction even when it is accessed. This lost time and value of teaching and learning will require more time and resources to make up. Other cost factors include transportation of fewer students per bus, lower capacity of schools and classrooms, and investments in equipment – from thermometers to air filters.

MABE has led many years of advocacy for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future passed in March and then vetoed. We so much appreciate your support for investments in our operating and capital budgets, including the Built to Learn Act. We know the value of meaningful policy advances in areas such as teacher pay and career ladders, community schools, wraparound services, trauma informed approaches, tutoring and targeted interventions, and behavioral health services.

Sadly, realizing the potential of these programs to transform the educational experiences for our students will remain out of reach without the accompanying state and local funding, or at the very least federal stabilization funding to prevent draconian cuts as our economy recovers.

Thank you for this opportunity to emphasize the critical role that federal, state and local funding play in making a high quality public education possible for each student as school systems grapple with new challenges in extremely uncertain times.