STATE EDUCATION FUNDING

MABE POSITIONS

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education, representing all local boards of education in Maryland:

- ✓ **Supports** the policy and funding recommendations of the Kirwan Commission as contained in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act of 2020 to update and enhance Maryland's school finance system, consistent with preserving local board governance authority.

- ✓ **Supports** increased State funding in response to the COVID-19 pandemic for digital and distance learning including expanded broadband service, mental and behavioral health staff and services, school facilities operations and maintenance, and targeted interventions to recover lost learning time.

- ✓ **Supports** legislation to ensure that the September 30, 2020 enrollment count does not negatively impact the level of mandated state and local funding for FY 2022 or in future years.

- ✗ **Opposes** efforts to reduce state funding or shift funding obligations from the State to local governments.

BACKGROUND

MABE was fully engaged in advocating for the education funding and policy reforms developed by the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education from 2016 to 2020, and the resulting Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act passed, and vetoed, in 2020. The Blueprint legislation proposes a long-term phase-in of mandated increases in State and local funding for public education, increases that represent the commitment Maryland must make to fully and equitably fund a world class public education for all of Maryland's nearly 1 million students. The Commission's recommendations and key components of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act, include:

- Ensuring high-quality early childhood education and care, including expanded full-day prekindergarten for low-income three and four year-olds;
- Elevating teachers and leaders through increased salaries and numbers of teachers, counselors and other staff, including a more diverse workforce;
- Creating a world-class instructional system of college and career readiness pathways, including career and technical education (CTE);
- Increasing per pupil funding for all students and targeting additional funding for students who need it most, including economically disadvantaged students, students receiving special education services, and English language learners;
- Providing comprehensive supports by targeting funding to schools serving high concentrations of students living in poverty to provide community schools which feature before-and after-school, summer academic programs, and student access to needed health and social services; and
- Ensuring excellence for all through enhanced oversight and accountability to ensure that the Commission's recommendations are successfully implemented and produce the desired results.

Maryland's Constitution places the highest priority on public education by requiring the General Assembly to "establish a thorough and efficient system of free public schools" and to "provide by taxation or otherwise for their maintenance." Courts have interpreted this to mean funding must be sufficient to provide all students with "an adequate education measured by contemporary educational standards"; and if sufficient funding is not provided, the State is failing to meet its constitutional duty. MABE is confident that Maryland can fulfill its constitutional mandate to fully fund and support an adequate, equitable, and excellent education for all students if the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act is enacted and fully funded.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only caused a public health crisis but also an economic downturn and reduction in state and local revenues on which Maryland's public schools rely. MABE continues to advocate for increased state and federal funding to uphold Maryland's constitutional imperative to fully fund public education, and the moral imperative to equitably meet the education needs of each of our nearly 1 million students.

For additional information, see MABE's Resolution on Adequate and Equitable Education Funding.