

LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION GOVERNANCE

MABE POSITIONS

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

- ✓ **Supports** local board governance of education policy and administration and believes that this principle is fundamental to an effective system of public education that promotes high standards of academic and fiscal accountability.
- ✓ **Supports** local board control of, and accountability for, appropriations of the school system budget.
- ✓ **Supports** adequate and equitable state funding for state mandated programs and policies and that local board governance autonomy and flexibility are respected in funding decisions.
- ✗ **Opposes** executive, legislative, and agency actions and proposals which would have the effect of reducing or circumscribing local board authority or creating unfunded mandates.

BACKGROUND

MABE believes the principle of local governance by boards of education is fundamental to a sound system of public education; and that a sound system of public education is fundamental to sustaining the well-educated citizenry essential to a flourishing democracy. By retaining decision-making authority at the local level, local boards of education can best balance educational practices, available resources to implement those practices, public input, and academic and financial accountability.

State law provides that “educational matters that affect the counties shall be under the control of a county board of education” and that local boards “determine, with the advice of the county superintendent, the educational policies of the county school system.” Local boards exercise this governance authority in compliance with state and federal laws and in conjunction with the policies and regulations adopted by the State Board of Education.

Each local board plays a vital role in governing the local school system and engaging local communities and promoting participation by parents and other community members in the education process. Local boards are the primary advocates for local, state, and federal funding to support the teaching and learning of students and efficient and effective school system administration. Through MABE’s board development program and other professional development activities, each board is striving to continuously improve its ability to govern in a manner that best meets the needs of all students in the local school system.

Local governance authority of boards of education in Maryland and throughout the nation is often challenged by state, federal, and private sector initiatives. MABE advocates that the General Assembly, Governor, and State Board engage in collaborative development of new policies and programs. MABE appreciates the strong historical record of the General Assembly’s recognition and support for the governance role of local boards.

In 2019, MABE successfully supported the Community Control of School Calendars Act to reverse the Governor’s 2016 executive order prohibiting locally adopted school calendars starting before Labor Day or extending beyond June 15. MABE’s participation and leadership on the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education from 2016 to 2020 focused on securing increased State and local funding essential to supporting a world class college and career-ready education for all students through programs supported by all local boards. MABE believes the successful development and implementation of state laws, including the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Act, relies on the governance role of local boards in advancing equity and excellence for all students through locally adopted educational policies and budgets allocating limited resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested the mettle of each of Maryland’s 24 local boards by imposing unforeseeable hardships on students, families, teachers, and communities. Local boards are at the helm with their local superintendents making funding and policy decisions that are aligned with available state health and educational recovery standards and informed by ongoing community engagement.

For additional information, see [MABE’s Resolution on Local Board Governance Authority](#).