

Educational Equity
(Adopted 2019; amended 2021)

WHEREAS, in March 2017 MABE's President established an ad hoc Committee on Equity to provide a forum for local boards of education to participate in examination and discussion of the concept and issue of "equity" as it relates to student opportunity, learning and instruction in Maryland public schools, as well as to encourage shared learning on equity; and to make recommendations for a shared definition of "equity" and relationship to the work of Boards of Education in terms of MABE's work and the efforts of local boards of education; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, based on the recommendations of the ad hoc Committee on Equity, MABE's Board of Directors adopted an equity core value statement, a definition of educational equity, an equity lens, and an equity strategic plan goal; and

WHEREAS, MABE's equity core value states: "We champion educational equity and excellence for each student;" and

WHEREAS, MABE's definition of educational equity states: "For MABE, educational equity in Maryland 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;" and

WHEREAS, MABE's equity strategic plan goal is to: "Assist member boards in developing a shared understanding and vision of educational equity; by helping them to formulate and implement an equity policy that provides educational equity for each student by creating and maintaining equitable, inclusive, and diverse environments;" and

WHEREAS, during the 2018 MABE Annual Conference, the Equity Ad Hoc Committee debuted the MABE Equity Lens, comprised of five questions which should be considered when making a decision for any policy, program, practice, decision, or action;

- Who are the under-represented groups affected by this policy, program, practice, decision, or action? What are the potential impacts on these groups?
- Does this policy, program, practice, decision, or action worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences?

- How have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by this policy, program, practice, decision, or action? Can you validate your assessments in #1 and #2, having considered this stakeholder reaction?
- What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes (e.g., mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic, or managerial)?
- How will you (a) mitigate the negative impacts and (b) address the barriers identified above?; and

WHEREAS, MABE has developed a Model Policy on Educational Equity, which includes definitions, desired outcomes, guidelines, and procedures for review and reporting; and

WHEREAS, in 2019 the State Board of Education approved State regulations, under COMAR 13A.01.06.01-.05, requiring each local board of education to adopt an educational equity policy that is consistent with the State Board's approved requirements; and

WHEREAS, in 2021 the State Board amended its equity policy to reflect recommendations of its Task Force on Achieving Academic Equity and Excellence for Black Boys which focused on three key areas: social, emotional and behavioral supports; recruitment and training of skilled, competent teachers and administrators; and curricula and instruction; and

WHEREAS, the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 included not only a maintenance of effort requirement regarding overall levels of state funding but also a maintenance of equity requirement to prohibit states from disproportionately reducing per pupil spending or staffing levels in high-poverty school systems and schools; and

WHEREAS, MABE participates in the Maryland Coalition for Equity which includes the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People of Maryland, Casa de Maryland, Maryland Parent Teacher Association, Maryland Education Coalition, Maryland State Education Association, Baltimore Teachers Union, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland, Maryland State Department of Education, and others; and

WHEREAS, since 2016, MABE, local board members, superintendents, and staff have participated in the annual Equity Symposium held by the National School Boards Association (NSBA) to provide a forum for school board members, public school advocates, and community leaders to examine and discuss the strategies, current trends, research, and best practices that are positively impacting the educational outcomes of academically and economically disadvantaged students in traditional K-12 public settings;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that MABE pledges to continue to provide a forum for local boards of education to participate in examination and discussion of the concept and issue of educational equity as it relates to student opportunity, learning and instruction in Maryland public schools, as well as to encourage shared learning on equity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE pledges to continue to utilize the MABE Equity Lens in the decision-making processes of the MABE Board of Directors, standing committees, ad hoc committees, and other decision-making processes within the association; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE urges the State Board of Education and local boards to use the MABE Equity Lens in their decision-making processes.