

FEDERAL EDUCATION FUNDING & POLICY

MABE POSITIONS

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

- ✓ **Supports** increased federal funding to states and local school systems to support the costs of implementing federally mandated educational programs and services.
- ✓ **Supports** federal education funding to address public health services, virtual learning, broadband services, school facilities maintenance and systemic improvements, access to school meals, and other programs and services to address pandemic-related learning loss and promote student learning.
- ✓ **Supports** a prominent role for MABE and local boards in engaging Maryland's federal delegation in developing federal funding, legislation, and policies.
- ✗ **Opposes** unfunded federal mandates and federal guidance, policies, regulations, or laws proposed to establish reporting requirements, performance standards, assessments, sanctions, or other conditions which do not adequately respect the governance role of local boards of education.

BACKGROUND

The passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 represented a comprehensive revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which since 2001 was known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Unlike the controversial NCLB, ESSA reduced or eliminated many federal requirements, including punitive measures, while increasing the ability of states and school systems to define how school boards and individual schools are held accountable for student achievement. Maryland's Protect Our Schools Act of 2017 governs the State's student performance accountability system under ESSA.

The COVID-19 pandemic became the overriding focus of federal appropriations and policy-making in 2020, 2021, and 2022 and MABE has engaged in extensive outreach and advocacy with Maryland's congressional delegation and U.S. Department of Education. MABE priorities include sufficient federal funding to guarantee overall school funding stability for Maryland's 24 school systems and increased funding and flexibility for the E-Rate program and regulatory changes targeted to expand broadband access essential to achieve universal connectivity to digital and distance learning.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act became law on May 27, 2020 and provided more than \$2 trillion in response to the public health and economic crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the CARES Act's Education Stabilization Fund provided only \$30 billion in education funding for elementary and secondary education. Fortunately, the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act enacted in March 2021 provided much needed direct federal aid to states including \$2 billion for Maryland. The ARP funding has allowed Maryland to set aside state funding commensurate with the costs to launch the Blueprint law and sustain increased levels of education funding in the coming fiscal years. The ARP Act includes Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding for direct aid to school systems and competitive state grants. Top priorities within Maryland's ARP ESSER Plan include: addressing the mental health and social-emotional learning needs of students and addressing the impact resulting from the pandemic's disruption to learning. MSDE used ESSER funds to create the Maryland Leads program to provide \$169 million in grants focusing on reading instruction, teacher workforce development, tutoring, and other innovative programs.

The federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act enacted in November 2021 does not provide any school construction funding, but does include the expansion of broadband services to expand educational connectivity for students and families, and substantial funding for energy efficient school buses. MABE will continue to advocate for federal legislation, regulations, and appropriations to support sound implementation of ESSA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Perkins Career & Technical Education Act, school-based Medicaid reimbursable services, and full funding and improvements in other federal policy areas.

For additional information, see [MABE's Resolution on ESEA](#).