MABE is generally supportive of the state taking bold, innovative steps to build Maryland’s teacher pipeline and workforce. MABE believes that the apprenticeship model is worth pursuing in order to make meaningful progress toward recruiting and retaining high-quality and diverse educators in all classrooms from PreK through 12th grade. Senate Bill 668, by creating a new Teacher Apprenticeship Program within the Maryland Department of Labor, would meaningfully enhance state efforts to promote the profession of teaching as a career path for many more talented Marylanders who may not be aware of the rapidly improving compensation and working conditions under the Blueprint, and who would benefit for the apprenticeship approach under this new program. The bill would also ensure that apprenticeship programs in high schools provide scheduling flexibility and access to well-rounded and rigorous academic courses during the student’s apprenticeship.

Local boards firmly believe that the role of a full complement of qualified staff, including large numbers of new teachers, will be pivotal to the successful implementation of Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. The Blueprint features major expansions of full-day PreK, student behavioral health services, college readiness courses, and career and technical education programs. Passage of Senate Bill 668 will certainly advance the statewide effort to recruit, educate, and retain the professional educators essential to meet these objectives.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 668.