Maryland Association of Boards of Education
2024 Legislative Positions

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, broadband services, school facilities, school meals, and other programs and services.
- ✓ **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 beginning in 2020, and MABE engaged in extensive outreach and advocacy with Maryland's congressional delegation and U.S. Department of Education to advocate for increased funding to assist school systems in meeting pandemic-related challenges. MABE is deeply concerned about the specter of the federal funding cliff resulting from the expiration of this federal funding.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act enacted in 2020 provided more than $2 trillion in response to the public health and economic crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, providing $30 billion in education funding for elementary and secondary education. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act enacted in 2021 provided direct federal aid to states, including $2 billion for Maryland. The ARP Act included 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 the impact resulting from the pandemic's disruption to learning. MSDE also 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. In these ways federal pandemic-related funding has been critically important to supporting public education in Maryland.

The federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act enacted in 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. In addition, the federal Inflation Reduction Act ("IRA") enacted in 2022 allows local school systems to access funding for renewable energy installation projects and energy-efficient schools.

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 increased funding and improvements in other federal policy areas.

For additional information, see MABE's Resolution on ESEA.