

STATE EDUCATION FUNDING FOR EQUITY & EXCELLENCE

MABE POSITIONS

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

- ✓ **Supports** full funding at the state and local levels for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future law enacted in 2021 to reform and enhance Maryland's public education and school finance system.
- ✓ **Supports** full funding for the Blueprint law and other mandated programs in a manner that is consistent with preserving local board governance authority.
- ✓ **Supports** increased State funding to support the array of mandated programs under state law and regulations, including any newly adopted mandates.
- ✗ **Opposes** efforts to reduce state funding or shift funding obligations from the State to local governments.

BACKGROUND

MABE was fully engaged in advocating for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future law enacted in 2021, which includes an array of mandates impacting state and local funding and educational programs. Overall, the Blueprint represents the commitment Maryland must make to fully and equitably fund and deliver a world class public education for all of Maryland's nearly 900,000 students. Specifically, the Blueprint features numerous funding and policy reforms organized within five pillars.

1. Early Childhood Education: high quality public full-day prekindergarten for three- and four-year olds;
2. High-quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders: pay raises and improved working conditions for teachers;
3. College and Career Readiness Pathways (including Career and Technical Education): academic and career-focused programs, including access to dual enrollment and apprenticeships for all students;
4. More Resources to Ensure All Students are Successful: community schools in highest needs communities, and targeted funding for special education, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students; and
5. Governance and Accountability: school finance reforms including per pupil school-based funding accountability, and annual state and local implementation plans overseen by the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB).

The Blueprint appropriately mandates significant state funding to support the development and phase-in of the expanded programs described above. However, these state funding increases are not sufficient to achieve the mandated reforms, and the Blueprint does not require sufficient increases in local funding to compensate for the lack of adequate state funding. MABE is deeply concerned that the success of the Blueprint's many reforms will only be possible through increased state funding, increased flexibility for local school systems beyond the Blueprint's categorical restrictions, and reasonable and equitable mandated increases in local funding.

Importantly, the Blueprint reforms and funding obligations must be met as school systems are struggling to budget for all other personnel and operating expenses. Each of 24 school systems confront rising costs driven primarily by inflation and staffing shortages, in essential school services such as student transportation, health services, school safety, school facilities maintenance, and food services. Other cost drivers include employee and retiree health benefits.

Maryland's Constitution places the highest priority on public education by requiring the General Assembly to "establish a thorough and efficient system of free public schools" and to "provide by taxation or otherwise for their maintenance." Courts have interpreted this to mean funding must be sufficient to provide all students with "an adequate education measured by contemporary educational standards." MABE is confident that Maryland can fulfill its constitutional duty to fully fund and support an adequate, equitable, and excellent education for each student if the Blueprint law, and other mandated and essential programs, services, and operations, are fully funded.

For additional information, see MABE's [Resolution on Adequate and Equitable Federal, State and Local Funding of Public Education](#).