

BILL: House Bill 1231
TITLE: Public Schools - Student Health Professional Retention Program -
Established
DATE: March 8, 2022
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes this legislation on the basis of supporting the continued implementation and operation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act, without significantly expanding the scope of mandated reforms, including the scope of collective bargaining.

MABE is committed to the success of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act and the successful launch of 13 years of continuous improvement and innovation in the delivery of elementary and secondary education in Maryland's public schools. Our nearly 900,000 public school students deserve nothing less.

MABE led the advocacy effort to create the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education precisely so that an updated adequacy study and other funding and accountability issues could be debated and transformed into legislation to update and improve Maryland's school finance system. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act represents the culmination of these efforts. MABE views the Kirwan Commission's recommendations and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation as a resounding "Call to Action" for the building of a world class education system in Maryland.

This Blueprint guarantees the fulfillment of the key policy and funding provisions in the following major policy areas, to ensure that each student, in every school, in every community, is provided with:

- High-quality early childhood education programs for 3 and 4 year-olds;
- High-quality and increasingly diverse teachers and principals;
- Access to college and career readiness pathways (including advanced college prep programs and career and technical education that leads to employment); and
- The significant additional state and local resources needed to ensure that each and every student is afforded every opportunity to succeed.

This legislation would radically expand the scope of the original Blueprint law by directing local school systems to address issues of compensation and bargaining for "school health professionals" as defined in the bill. MABE believes that the significant funding increases and policy reforms in the Blueprint are vital to fulfilling Maryland's constitutional duty to provide equitable access for all students to an excellent education.

MABE also continues to believe that local boards must be at the helm, fulfilling the responsibility to govern school systems in accordance with the Blueprint and in the best interests of all students.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 1231.