BILL: **House Bill 598**
TITLE: **Education – Funding for General Education Programs – Definition Alterations**
POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**
DATE: **March 14, 2023**
COMMITTEE: **Appropriations**
CONTACT: **John R. Woolums, Esq.**

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports House Bill 598 which would add a new component to the enrollment-based school funding system in Maryland.

MABE supports the concept introduced by House Bill 598 to appropriately enhance the provision of state aid to school systems experiencing consistent enrollment growth. Such school systems inherently experience wider gaps between the numbers of students in classrooms at the start of the new school year and the amount of pupil funding generated by the prior year's September 30 enrollment count. House Bill 598 would close these gaps and, with straightforward amendments, ensure that other school systems with declining enrollments are in no way negatively affected.

MABE traditionally opposes legislation proposing to shift form the actual September 30 student count from the prior year, recognizing that such proposals invariably result in less funding for certain jurisdictions. For this reason, MABE typically supports maintaining the current methodology for counting students enrolled in public schools for the purpose of determining state and local aid amounts in the following fiscal year. With amendments to clarify that House Bill 598 would serve to supplement, not subtract, from any jurisdiction's current enrollment-based funding allocation, MABE supports this bill's approach to addressing a longstanding concern.

To be clear, MABE supports House Bill 598 with an amendment to ensure that state funding is based on the greater of the full-time equivalent enrollment count, the 3-year moving average enrollment, or the sum of the prior school year full-time equivalent enrollment and the average enrollment change as defined in the bill.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 598 with the amendments described above.