

BILL: Senate Bill 628
TITLE: School-Based Health Centers – Services, Infrastructure, and Funding
DATE: February 28, 2023
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS
COMMITTEE: Finance
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, supports Senate Bill 628 which would require the development of a funding formula to support school-based health centers, increase the number of centers, and ensure that the scope of health services provided includes sports physicals.

MABE supports this legislation in facilitate a more robust and intentional approach to needs assessments, predictable funding, and alignment between school facilities and school-based health center design and construction. There are approximately 95 school-based health centers located in 17 Maryland jurisdictions, and these numbers have increased significantly in recent years. These centers offer comprehensive preventive and primary health services which may include behavioral health, oral health, and other health support services.

The statewide needs assessment completed under contract for the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) in December, 2022 makes several funding and policy recommendations which are reflected, in part, in Senate Bill 628. Again, MABE supports the passage of Senate Bill 628 to facilitate the operation of school-based health centers to meet the needs of students and families throughout the State. However, the bill specifically mandates that MDH develop a budget proposal to establish at least one school-based health center in each county. Therefore, MABE requests an amendment to clarify that local school boards retain full governance authority regarding whether and where to locate a school-based health center within their school system.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 628 with the amendment described above.