

BILL: Senate Bill 648
TITLE: Local School Systems – Educator Screening – Educator Identification Clearinghouse (School Personnel Vetting and Hiring Transparency Act)
HEARING DATE: April 1, 2026
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: House Ways & Means Committee
CONTACT: Sam Mathias, Legal & Policy Director (smathias@mabe.org)

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all 24 local boards of education across the State, **supports Senate Bill 648.**

Senate Bill 648 requires that each local school system become an associate member of a national membership organization that provides access to the Educator Identification Clearinghouse to screen prospective educators. It requires the Maryland State Department of Education to pay for membership fees of all local school boards, and for local school boards to screen candidates through the Clearinghouse.

The Clearinghouse contemplated by this bill is the only known national database that includes records of administrative actions such as admonishments, suspensions, and license revocations issued in other states. It is designed to supplement, not replace, traditional criminal background checks. Because many educator misconduct cases are resolved administratively rather than through the criminal justice system, the Clearinghouse provides an additional safeguard to identify individuals who may pose a risk to students but would not be flagged through standard background screening.

Many Maryland school systems already use and pay for access to this Clearinghouse. Centralizing membership through the Maryland State Department of Education and having the state take on the cost to provide statewide access ensures consistent screening practices across jurisdictions and strengthens student safety protections. This approach is both practical and cost effective for local boards.

MABE appreciates the sponsors of this bill and its cross-file in the House, and their collaboration with MSDE and stakeholders to refine the bill through minor and thoughtful amendments that address an operational concern while maintaining the bill’s core safety objectives. **MABE therefore supports Senate Bill 648 as amended and requests a favorable report.**