

2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Board of Education of Frederick County

Legislative Principles for Advocacy



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THE ROLE OF LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Local boards of education are uniquely positioned to manage that change for our districts and communities.

- Local school boards, through their public meetings, attendance at events, and daily discourse and engagement with the community at large, provide citizens the venue for regular, meaningful public dialogue around specific educational goals and expectations for their community's students.
- Local boards of education function within the context of their communities' values and goals. They are best situated to evaluate their schools' strengths, weaknesses, and needs. They are best positioned to identify where, on the path of progress, their district lies, and to determine how best to move forward to meet the broader vision set forth at the state and federal level.
- School boards are also the best positioned to effectively communicate and reflect community concerns, feedback and suggestions on goals, laws and regulations set at the state and federal level. Acting as the local voice and advocate on education issues is an important piece of the local governance that school boards provide.

For these reasons, the Board of Education of Frederick County appreciates and values when legislators consider the role of school boards when deliberating on or enacting any legislation, policy, or reform related to education.

I. FUNDING FOR EDUCATION THAT IS ADEQUATE AND EQUITABLE

The Board of Education of Frederick County acknowledges the importance of a variety of components that equip our students to be empowered learners and engaged citizens who will achieve a positive impact in their communities and the world. The Board is committed to providing quality, well-rounded educational program, from pre-kindergarten through graduation, while meeting the unique and varied needs of each and every student. The Board also understands the critical need for highly qualified teachers, administrators and staff in meeting school system goals, as well as the necessity for adequate resources and materials to optimize student learning.

The Board of Education of Frederick County **supports**:

- ✓ An aggressive level of school funding in the FY 2017 state budget, including full funding of the Bridge to Excellence Act, maintaining the per pupil foundation amount, the provision of increases mandated by the Act's annual inflation factor, and full funding of the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI).
- ✓ Continuation of the scheduled phase-in of the Net Taxable Income (NTI) increases to 60% in FY 2017.
- ✓ Supports a per pupil funding allocation for students attending prekindergarten, without any offsetting reduction in compensatory funding.
- ✓ Sufficient funding to enable local school boards to provide equitable access and support for all students, including special education students, English Language Learners, economically disadvantaged students, and underperforming students in order to eliminate achievement gaps.
- ✓ Adequate funding for implementation of initiatives and mandates now required in implementation of Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS), such as investments in curriculum, assessments, evaluation systems, professional development and technology.
- ✓ Adequate funding for the expansion and growth of programs that prepare students for college and career, such as dual enrollment programs, certification programs, internships or transition courses.

The Board of Education of Frederick County **opposes**:

- ✗ Any new state or federal policies or programs that result in unfunded or underfunded mandates.
- ✗ Any attempt to retreat from full funding of the Bridge to Excellence Act or reduce the level of school funding.

II. ADEQUATE FUNDING TO IMPROVE SCHOOL FACILITIES AND CREATE CAPACITY

Frederick County is committed to utilizing resources strategically and responsibly to achieve our goals for students while inspiring public trust. The Board of Education is committed to ensuring optimal learning environments and acting as responsible stewards of our public buildings.

Though the county enjoys steady population growth, that growth poses challenges in keeping up with the demands for new seats while maintaining and renovating our older facilities to keep up with students' instructional needs.

The Board of Education of Frederick County supports:

- ✓ A state funding level of \$350 million for school construction and renovation projects for FY 2016 to provide the state's share of approved projects to build, renovate and improve school facilities. This is essential in light of the 2014 legislation requiring prevailing wage rates apply to school construction and major renovation projects receiving 25% or more in state funding.
- ✓ A required state cost share, for those projects that are in the state construction program, to cover school construction cost increases resulting from new state laws, mandated in regulations.
- ✓ Expansion of the state's bonding capacity to meet increasing school facility needs.
- ✓ Raising the threshold amount of state funding that triggers prevailing wage requirements from 25% to 50%, as it was from 2000 to 2014.
- ✓ Greater flexibility in the Public School Construction Program that would allow school systems to more easily and better meet local needs for construction and renovation.
- ✓ The development of innovative funding policies, strategies, and alternate financing models, **including public-private partnerships**, to meet increasing school facility needs.
- ✓ Revision of current standards for the Interagency Committee square footage allowances for new and revitalized/expanded schools to eliminate the penalty for building additional classrooms intended to reduce class size to support student achievement.

The Board of Education of Frederick County opposes:

- ✗ Any mandate regarding school size for elementary, middle or high school facilities.
- ✗ The development of any competitive grant program that would compete with or replace funding for the current State Public School Construction Program.

Project Priorities for State Funding
(Includes requests for State funds only in \$000)

	PROJECT	REQUEST	FY17 STATE REQUEST
1	Frederick HS Replacement: Construction	Construction Funding	\$21,885
2	New Sugarloaf Elementary School	Construction Funding	2,671
3	New Butterfly Ridge Elementary School	Construction Funding	2,671
4	Emmitsburg ES HVAC Replacement – Phase 2	Systemic Construction Funding	543
5	Myersville ES Roof Replacement	Systemic Construction Funding	200
6	Urbana HS Auditorium Repairs	Systemic Construction Funding	421
7	Hillcrest ES Windows/Doors Replacement	Systemic Construction Funding	233
8	Hillcrest ES Roof Replacement – Phase 1	Systemic Construction Funding	305
9	Walkersville “B” Boiler Replacement	Systemic Construction Funding	168
10	Carroll Manor ES Chiller Replacement	Systemic Construction Funding	212

TOTAL \$29,309

III. CONTINUED GOVERNANCE AND AUTHORITY FOR LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION

In the face of the sea change in education policy over the last several years, the Board of Education of Frederick County understands the role that local school boards across the state play in providing critical steady, stable, and community-based leadership to local students, schools and communities.

The Board of Education of Frederick County **supports**:

- ✓ Continued autonomy for all local boards of education to adopt education policies that promote high standards for academic and fiscal accountability. Students are best served by having an independent local board of education that is engaged with its superintendent and the school community to discuss and to debate important issues that directly impact the quality of education. The widely recognized success of Maryland schools is a testament to the effectiveness of this governance model.

The Board of Education of Frederick County **opposes**:

- ✗ Any legislation or regulatory initiatives that would have the effect of reducing local board governance, oversight, or budgetary authority.

Curriculum and Testing

- ✓ The Board of Education of Frederick County **supports** local decision-making authority in developing curriculum and assessments, in conjunction with the Maryland State Board of Education.
- ✓ The Board of Education of Frederick County **supports** adequate state funding to support any mandated assessment program, including the computer-based Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).
- ✗ The Board of Education of Frederick County **opposes** any efforts to legislate any curriculum assessment.
- ✗ The Board of Education of Frederick County **opposes** any efforts to prescribe any single assessment to determine student, teacher, school or school system performance.

School Calendar and Start Time

- ✗ The Board of Education of Frederick County utilizes the school calendar as an instructional tool. As such, in order to develop its calendar, it utilizes a calendar committee that has widespread representation from the school community. The school calendar is designated to provide students with maximum instructional days. The local board of education, in consultation with its stakeholders, is best suited to determine the school calendar. Accordingly, the Board of Education of Frederick County **opposes** legislation that would mandate that all school systems commence the school year on a certain date.
- ✗ The Board of Education of Frederick County has surveyed the community in the past regarding start times, as well as bell schedules. We believe that local boards of education are best positioned to determine the optimal balance of educational practices, inclusive of school start times and bell schedules for students that reflect the academic needs of students, community interest, and available funding and resources. As such, the Board of Education of Frederick County **opposes** legislation that would mandate that all school systems commence school after, before or at a specified time.

Charter Schools

- ✗ The Board of Education of Frederick County **opposes** legislation that would diminish the local board's role as primary chartering authority, or otherwise weaken the local board's academic or fiscal accountability oversight.

Student Discipline

- ✓ The Board of Education of Frederick County **supports** local flexibility to create and enforce consistent and fair disciplinary standards in order to respond to infractions of the rules committed by individual students.
- ✗ The Board of Education of Frederick County **opposes** legislation or regulations that would unduly limit the authority or ability of school administrators and local boards of education to ensure the safety of all students and staff.

Special Education

- ✓ The Board of Education of Frederick County **supports** strengthening funding for special education programs, including formula aid and reimbursement for special education students in nonpublic placement.
- ✗ The Board of Education of Frederick County **opposes** mandates that are unfunded or that weaken the local school system's ability to meet the unique needs of the students and families it serves.

IV. STUDENT HEALTH AND SCHOOL SAFETY

The Board of Education of Frederick County **supports**:

- ✓ Local board discretion to adopt policies and allocate resources to support improvements in student mental and physical health and well-being.
- ✓ Federal, state and local government funding for local public school safety programs, and the wide array of mental health and public safety services provided by other public and private entities, which are essential to maintaining safe schools and access to a quality education for all students.
- ✓ Local discretion to adopt programs and policies to maintain and improve school safety, including positive behavior intervention strategies to prevent and mitigate disruptions, and emergency plans to deal with any crisis that may occur in the school.

The Board of Education of Frederick County **opposes**:

- ✗ Any unfunded mandate for physical or health instruction, and/or physical, health, or mental health requirements.
- ✗ Any statewide or "one-size-fits-all" approach that would dictate or limit local board authority, or the local board's ability to meet the needs of local students and families.