



MSEA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2014

STRONG SCHOOLS STRONG MARYLAND

We must continue to invest in the students, educators, programs, and services that have made Maryland's public schools #1 in the nation for five consecutive years. Here's how:

1. Resources to move Maryland students forward and close achievement gaps

In the operating budget, MSEA supports full funding of Thornton education formulas and of the updated geographic cost of education index (GCEI). Additionally, we support new investments to expand pre-kindergarten so that more students are ready to learn and excel. In the capital budget, MSEA supports expanded school construction funding to address the \$3 billion in building and improving safe, modern facilities across the state. Keeping our schools #1 requires a commitment at the state and local level. Accordingly, we will oppose efforts to water down the maintenance of effort improvements from 2012 that protected the delicate partnership between the state and local governments to fund our schools.

2. Preparing for the needs and investments of the future

It is time to create the Thornton 2 Commission to ensure that there is adequate and equitable funding for students across the state. While the Bridge to Excellence and original Thornton commission has become a national model for public school financing, it is now 12 years old and it is time to review and establish the funding needs necessary to take our students and schools to even higher levels of achievement.

3. Ensuring education reforms support teaching and learning

Poorly planned implementation of new curriculum, student assessments, educator evaluations, and school accountability systems are all hitting at one time. This tsunami of education reforms threaten the pillars of our world-class schools. While accountability and student achievement are important goals, we cannot let unproven and unreliable testing and evaluation systems punish our teachers and principals, unfairly label our students and schools, and usurp local school systems' abilities to make policy decisions that work for their communities.

MSEA's legislative program engages the association in hundreds of other education-related topics and legislation. Our efforts to support schools, school employees, students, and their families include:

• Advancing the success and important work of the Public School Labor Relations Board

MSEA will educate the General Assembly on the importance of removing the sunset provision that threatens the continued successful work of the Public School Labor Relations Board. The Board serves as a fair and impartial arbiter in contract disputes between school systems and employees and must be allowed to continue its good and important work.

• Rejecting vouchers and neo-vouchers, like the Maryland Education Tax Credit/BOAST

Governor O'Malley and the General Assembly must reject schemes that divert public money to private schools that fail to meet the same high standards of accountability as public schools and that are not required to uphold the First Amendment and other rights and protections of students and employees. Additionally, MSEA opposes efforts in the operating and capital budget to finance non-public school supplies and construction.

- **Protecting Maryland's charter school law**

Maryland's charter school law is the strongest in the nation because it strikes the right balance between local control, accountability, and innovative instruction. Our top-ranked schools depend on keeping our standards high and our charter school law strong.

- **Increasing the minimum wage**

Income inequality and poverty have a direct correlation on the ability of students to learn. MSEA is part of the Raise Maryland Coalition to raise the minimum wage and index it to inflation to keep pace with the rising cost of living. Raising the minimum wage will help 472,000 working families in Maryland and will provide job and economic security that will bolster a better economy and living and learning conditions for our students.

- **Supporting the rights of community college employees to organize**

MSEA supports the rights of public employees to collectively bargain, including the faculty, adjunct staff, and support staff at the 16 community colleges across Maryland. Providing collective bargaining rights will provide a voice on issues of compensation and workload that are too easily ignored today. These rights exist for some employees in some of the institutions, but it is important to extend these rights to all community college employees across the state.

For more information on these and other important education issues, contact MSEA Government Relations, 410/263-6600; mseagr@mseanea.org.



MSEA is the 70,000-member Maryland affiliate of the National Education Association, which represents 3 million education employees across the country. MSEA is the state's largest professional association and supports 39 local affiliates throughout Maryland.

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