

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 981 (Senators Mathias and Colburn)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

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Wicomico County - Board of Education - Selection of Members - Straw Ballot

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This bill requires the Wicomico County Board of Elections, in consultation with the State Board of Elections, to hold a nonbinding referendum during the November 2012 general election regarding the selection of members of the Wicomico County Board of Education. The proposed referendum asks whether voters favor changing the method of selection for board of education members from appointment by the Governor to election by county voters.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2011.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** The Wicomico County Board of Elections can handle the bill's requirements with existing resources.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** The Wicomico County Board of Education consists of seven members appointed by the Governor from the county at large and serving five-year terms. An individual may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

**Background:** The Wicomico County Board of Education is one of five appointed school boards in the State, including one (Caroline County) that is in the process of transitioning to a hybrid board of appointed and elected members. Harford County has such a hybrid

board. Eighteen local boards are elected by county voters. The selection method and number of school board members for each of the 24 local boards are shown in **Exhibit 1**.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Local Boards of Education**

<b>School System</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Means of Selection<sup>1</sup></b>
Allegheny	7	4 years	E 5 from county at large 1 commissioner <i>ex officio</i> (nonvoting) 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Anne Arundel	9	5 years	A 3 from county at large 5 from legislative districts 1 student (one-year term)
Baltimore City	10	3 years	A 9 from city at large 1 student (one-year term)
Baltimore	12	5 years	A 4 from county at large 7 from council districts 1 student (one-year term)
Calvert	6	4 years	E 2 from county at large 3 from commissioner districts 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Caroline <sup>2</sup>	7	4 years	A/E 3 elected from school board districts 2 appointed from county at large 2 students (nonvoting, one-year term)
Carroll	9	4 years	E 5 from county at large 3 commissioners <i>ex officio</i> (nonvoting) 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Cecil	6	4 years	E 5 from commissioner districts 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Charles	8	4 years	E 7 from county at large 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Dorchester	7	4 years	E 5 from council districts 2 students (nonvoting, one-year term)
Frederick	8	4 years	E 7 from county at large 1 student (nonvoting, one year term)
Garrett	7	4 years	E 2 from county at large 3 from commissioner districts 1 commissioner <i>ex officio</i> (nonvoting) 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)

School System	Number of Members	Term	Means of Selection <sup>1</sup>
Harford	11	4 years	A/E 6 elected from council districts 3 appointed 1 superintendent <i>ex officio</i> (nonvoting) 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Howard	8	4 years	E 7 from county at large 1 student (one-year term)
Kent	6	4 years	E 5 from county at large 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Montgomery	8	4 years	E 2 from county at large 5 from school board districts 1 student (one-year term)
Prince George's	10	4 years	E 9 from school board districts 1 student (one-year term)
Queen Anne's	7	4 years	E 1 from county at large 4 from commissioner districts 2 students (nonvoting, one-year term)
St. Mary's	6	4 years	E 1 from county at large 4 from commissioner districts 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Somerset	5	4 years	E All from commissioner districts
Talbot	8	4 years	E 7 from school board districts 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Washington	8	4 years	E 7 from county at large 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Wicomico	7	5 years	A All from county at large
Worcester	10	4 years	E 7 from commissioner districts 3 students (nonvoting, one-year term)

<sup>1</sup>A = Appointed by Governor, except in Baltimore City where board is appointed jointly by the Governor and the Mayor. E = Elected. A/E = Combined appointed and elected board.

<sup>2</sup>Voters in Caroline County decided at the 2010 general election to change from an appointed board to a combination appointed and elected board beginning with the November 2012 general election. The terms of the five current appointed members will expire December 2, 2012.

Source: Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Sections 3-101 through 3-1405; local board of education websites

## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 1324 (Delegate Conway, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

**Information Source(s):** Wicomico County, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 18, 2011  
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