

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 966
Ways and Means

(Delegate McDermott, *et al.*)

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

This bill requires the Wicomico County Board of Elections to hold a nonbinding referendum at the November 2012 general election regarding the selection of members to the Wicomico County Board of Education. The proposed referendum asks whether voters favor changing the selection method of school board members from appointment by the Governor to a direct election by county voters.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2012.

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.

Analysis

Current Law: The Wicomico County Board of Education consists of seven members, all of whom are appointed by the Governor from the county at large.

Background: The Wicomico County Board of Education is one of five appointed school boards in the State, including one (Caroline County) that is presently 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**.

Exhibit 1
Local Boards of Education in Maryland

| School System | Number of Members | Term | Means of Selection¹ | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Allegany | 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 ² | 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 ¹ |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------|-----|---|
| 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) |

¹A = 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.

²Voters 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: SB 99 (Senators Colburn and Mathias) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

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

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ncs/hlb

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