



The Maryland School for the Blind

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Senate Bill 640 – Maryland School for the Blind – Board of Directors – Reappointments

Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

February 18, 2020

The Maryland School for the Blind (MSB) respectfully asks for your support of SB 640 in order to facilitate recruitment efforts to fill board vacancies.

The Maryland School for the Blind plays a central and critical role in Maryland, meeting the federal requirement to make available a full continuum of *free appropriate public education which includes specialized schools* under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

A Board of Directors is critical to oversight, setting the vision and goals, and holding the school accountable for its financial management and educational results. Under current law directors may serve three consecutive three-year terms or a total of nine years, after which they are ineligible for board membership, even though they may continue to be committed to the school's mission and vision and desire to remain involved.

In recent years, MSB has had difficulty in attracting board members and there have been only a few new additions to the board. Currently the Board has seven vacancies.

Senate Bill 640 proposes to amend the school charter and bylaws to allow the Board to reengage former board members, who were in good standing, to return to the board following a year off. This practice, in fact, is not uncommon in other non-profit boards.

By allowing former board members to be eligible to be nominated after a one-year hiatus, the Board will be able to fill many of its vacancies and have a fully functioning board with all of its committee positions filled and allowing it to maintain continuity of leadership and institutional knowledge.

Thank you for your support of Senate Bill 640.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Robert Hair, Superintendent