



BILL: House Bill 995 / Senate Bill 852
TITLE: Washington County Board of Education-Members-Residency Requirement
HEARING DATE: February 21, 2024 / March 6, 2024
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEES: House Ways and Means / Senate Education, Energy and the Environment
CONTACT: Mr. Steve Edwards, Deputy Communications Officer (301-766-8914)

The Washington County Board of Education supports House Bill 995 and is appreciative of the Washington County Delegation introducing the measure in collaboration with the Board. The bill would require that a member of the Washington County Board of Education be a resident of Washington County for at least six months, and the state for at least 12 months, immediately preceding the date the member takes office, similar to the requirement of State Delegate and Senator. Further, the bill would require members of the county board to maintain a primary residence in Washington County during their term.

Washington County is currently the only county in Maryland that does not have a residency requirement for individuals seeking election to, and serving on, the Board of Education. Correcting this oversight by approving this bill and implementing a residency requirement will help to ensure all Washington County residents are represented on the Board of Education by a fellow citizen of the county and the State.

Local boards of education carry great responsibility. As outlined in State law, they are responsible for all education matters that affect the jurisdiction they serve, carrying out applicable provisions of law and regulations, maintaining a uniform system of public schools designed to provide a quality education and equal educational opportunity for all children, determining the educational policies of the school system, preparing the annual budget, and employing individuals in positions that the board considers necessary for the operation of the schools. These responsibilities are best addressed by individuals who reside in the community they serve and therefore, have a vested interest in their work and the success of the county's schools.

The Washington County Board of Education respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 995.

Thank you.

Cc: Washington County Board of Education Members
Washington County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly
Dr. David T. Sovine, Superintendent
Dr. Jennifer Webster, Associate Superintendent for Administration and Leadership
Dr. Garry Willow, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Jeffrey Proulx, Chief Operating Officer
Ms. Ilissa Ramm, Chief Legal Counsel
Mr. John Woolums, Director of Governmental Relations, Maryland Association of Boards of Education
Ms. Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland