

BENJAMIN BROOKS
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 712
State Board of Education – Membership
Educational Support and Administrator Members

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
February 21, 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of this committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on SB712—State Board of Education—Membership—Educational Support and Administrator Members. The purpose of this bill is to alter the State Board of Education membership.

The State Board of Education, consisting of 13 members and one student member, with partial voting rights, is tasked with establishing educational policies and standards for public schools, and overseeing the state's education system. Collectively, they ensure our students have access to a world-class educational system that equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary for post-secondary education, meaningful careers, and success in both society and life.

Currently, the State Board membership only requires the following roles as mandated members: a certified teacher of the State of Maryland, a parent of a student in the State of Maryland, and an enrolled high school student in good standing within the State of Maryland. SB712 further mandates that two of the 13 regular members be an educational support professional (ESP) and an administrator, to be elected under the same procedures already in place for other mandated members. It does not expand the number of members but rather alters the makeup of the board members to ensure the benefit of diverse and unique perspectives when making decision that impact all our students.

Education support professionals include paraeducators, administrative assistants, custodians, bus drivers, security and technology staff, food service workers, and other school employees vital to student and school success. Nationally, support professionals make up more than 40 percent of the total K-12 education workforce, and more than 80 percent live in the same school districts where they work. In Maryland and nationwide, ESPs are a critically important part of the school community. Education support professionals take care of our children every day and make sure they have the tools they need to succeed in our schools and classrooms.

Likewise, administrators include principals, assistant principals, or any other administrative-level professional working in a public school. Effective administrators work to cultivate trust, which supports confidence in the school's leader and sets the stage for any collaborative efforts. They possess the skills needed to manage a complex organization which includes managing budgets and resources, hiring and managing personnel, and setting goals while thinking strategically about how to meet them.

Both of these important professional roles are an intricate part of the school community and often interact with students outside of the classroom. Insight from educational support professionals and administrators would allow for a better understanding and unique perspective of what our educational system currently looks like and what changes we could make for a brighter future for Maryland's education. It's imperative that the Maryland State Board of Education gives a voice to educational support professionals and administrators who have invaluable first-hand experiences with our students.

For these reasons, I am requesting a favorable report on SB712.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the text "With kindest regards,".

Benjamin Brooks