



SB0040 Baltimore County Board of Education - Alterations of Elected Member Districts and Establishment of Redistricting Process

Position: Favorable

February 18, 2026

The Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE), a coalition of education advocacy, civil rights, and community-based organizations committed to eliminating racial disparities in Maryland's education system, **writes in strong support of SB40 which addresses a critical structural challenge in Baltimore County's school board representation.** While this bill's immediate necessity stems from practical considerations—the County Council's expansion from seven to nine districts—it presents a profound opportunity to advance educational equity through more intentional representation.

I commend Senator Sydnor for his leadership in addressing this matter with both urgency and thoughtfulness. As the Senator notes, current law requires school board members to be elected from councilmanic districts. With the County Council expanding to nine districts in 2026, we face a legal misalignment that demands immediate resolution. SB 40 provides a measured approach: maintaining the current seven elected seats while decoupling school board districts from councilmanic boundaries.

This is not merely a technical fix. This is an opportunity to reimagine how Baltimore County structures democratic accountability for its schools. Educational governance is fundamentally about whose voices shape decisions affecting our children. The current system, while functional, ties school board representation to boundaries drawn primarily for general government purposes. These boundaries may not reflect:

Educational communities of interest. School attendance zones, feeder patterns, and clusters of schools that serve interconnected communities often cross councilmanic district lines. Parents and educators organizing around specific schools or regional educational challenges may find their collective voice fragmented across multiple districts.

Demographic representation relevant to educational equity. Baltimore County, like many districts, has communities with distinct educational needs shaped by race, income, language, and historical access to resources. If councilmanic boundaries dilute concentrations of communities that have been historically underserved by education systems, school board-specific redistricting could create districts where these communities have genuine electoral influence over education policy.

Student-centered boundaries. Rather than being an afterthought to general governance, district lines could be drawn with student populations, educational access, and learning outcomes as primary considerations.

MAREE is committed to racial equity in education and the development of culturally responsive educators; we see this decoupling as essential groundwork. It creates the structural possibility for representation that truly centers educational justice. SB 40's framework—freezing current councilmanic districts as school board districts through 2030, then requiring redistricting after each decennial census—gives Baltimore County eight years to develop a redistricting process that actively promotes educational equity.

Just as we advocate for culturally responsive teaching in classrooms, we must advocate for culturally responsive structures in educational governance. This means representation systems that recognize and honor the diverse communities they serve, that create space for voices historically excluded from power, and that design accountability to flow toward families and students rather than away from them.

SB 40 creates the infrastructure for this kind of governance. It will not automatically deliver educational equity—no structural change alone can do that. But it removes an arbitrary constraint and creates new possibilities. How Baltimore County uses this opportunity will depend on continued advocacy, community organizing, and political will.

Our children deserve school board members who are accountable to the communities most affected by educational decisions. This bill moves us closer to that goal.

peace & truth,
sharlimar douglass
Education Justice Advocate & Analyst
Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE)