

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 596

(Delegates Eckardt and Schisler)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs

Dorchester County - Board of Education - Election of Members

This bill changes the Dorchester County Board of Education from a six-member appointed board to a five-member elected board. Three new members will be elected at the 2004 general election, and two new members will be elected at the 2006 general election.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Dorchester County expenditures could increase by \$1,400 in FY 2005 and 2006 due to the minimal increase in compensation for elected board of education members. County expenditures could decrease by \$1,800 annually beginning in FY 2007 due to the reduced number of board members.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill provides that the elected Dorchester County Board of Education will consist of five voting members, with one member elected from each of the five councilmanic districts in Dorchester County. Elected members will serve staggered four-year terms and may not serve more than three consecutive terms. The County Council appoints new members to fill vacancies on the board.

In addition to the five voting members, the board will include one nonvoting student member from each of the public high schools in the county. Student members must be in the twelfth grade and are elected by the students in their schools. Student members do not attend executive sessions of the board unless invited to do so by an affirmative vote of a majority of the board.

Upon notice and an opportunity for a hearing, the State Board of Education may remove a county board member for immorality, misconduct in office, incompetency, willful neglect of duty, or failure to attend scheduled meetings. A member who is removed has a right to a *de novo* review in circuit court.

At the beginning of each calendar year, the county board must select a president and a vice president from among its members. Voting members receive compensation as set by the County Council, although voting members must receive at least \$3,200 and the president of the board must receive at least \$3,600.

The county board must meet at least once a month and must make records of the meetings available to the public.

Current Law: The Dorchester County Board of Education consists of six voting members appointed by the Governor and two student representatives, one from each of the two high schools in the county. Voting members serve five-year terms, and the student representatives serve one-year terms. With the approval of the Governor, the State Superintendent of Schools may remove a board member for immorality, misconduct in office, incompetency, willful neglect of duty, or failure to attend board meetings. If one of the six voting members vacates the position, the Governor appoints a replacement.

In fiscal 2002, the voting members of the Dorchester County Board of Education received compensation of \$3,000 each, except the president who received \$3,200. Members are not reimbursed for travel or other expenses.

Background: The Dorchester County Board of Education is one of 11 appointed school boards in the State. Another 12 local boards of education are elected, and one, the Worcester County board, is in the process of transitioning from an appointed board to an elected board. The selection methods and number of school board members for the 24 local boards are shown in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1
Local Boards of Education
Number of Members and Selection Methods

County	Full Voting Members	Elected Members			Student Member(s)
		Appointed Members	County At Large	From Districts	
Allegany	5	0	5	0	1
Anne Arundel	7	7	0	0	1
Baltimore City	9	9	0	0	1
Baltimore	11	11	0	0	1
Calvert	5	0	2	3	1
Caroline	5	5	0	0	0
Carroll	5	0	5	0	1
Cecil	5	5	0	0	1
Charles	7	0	7	0	1
Dorchester	6	6	0	0	2
Frederick	7	0	7	0	1
Garrett	5	0	2	3	1
Harford	7	7	0	0	1
Howard	5	0	5	0	0
Kent	5	0	5	0	0
Montgomery	7	0	2	5	1
Prince George's*	9	9	0	0	1
Queen Anne's	5	5	0	0	0
St. Mary's	5	0	1	4	1
Somerset	5	0	0	5	2
Talbot	5	5	0	0	1
Washington	7	0	7	0	1
Wicomico	7	7	0	0	0
Worcester	7	3	0	4	3

* In 2006 the Prince George's Board of Education will revert to an elected board, with four members elected from the county at large and five elected from five school board districts.

Local Expenditures: In accordance with the board member compensation set by the County Council, Dorchester County expenditures would increase minimally in fiscal

2005 and 2006 and decrease slightly in fiscal 2007 and 2008 due to the reduction in the number of board members. Compensation for school board members currently total \$18,200 (\$3,200 for the board president and \$3,000 for each of the other five members). Pursuant to this legislation, compensation for school board members would total \$19,600 in fiscal 2005 and 2006 (\$3,600 for the board president and \$3,200 for each of the other five members). This represents a \$1,400 increase in county expenditures in both years. Beginning on January 1, 2007, the number of school board members declines from six to five members, resulting in a \$1,800 annual decrease in county expenditures.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 464 (Senator Colburn) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Department of Legislative Services

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