

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2007 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 1297  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Carter, *et al.*)

---

**Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners - Structure of Board - Straw Ballot**

---

This bill requires the Baltimore City Board of Elections, in consultation with the State Board of Elections, to hold a nonbinding referendum during the November 2007 general election regarding the selection of members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners. The proposed referendum asks whether voters favor maintaining the current selection process for members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, or adopting a new process that has some members appointed by the Governor, some appointed by the mayor, and some elected directly by Baltimore City voters.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2007.

---

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** None. The Baltimore City Board of Elections could handle the bill's requirements with existing resources.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

---

**Analysis**

**Current Law:** The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners includes 10 members, of whom 9 are appointed jointly by the Governor and the Mayor of Baltimore City from a list of qualified people submitted by the State Board of Education,

and the tenth is a student member with restricted voting rights. Members of the board must be residents of Baltimore City and, to the extent practicable, must reflect the demographic composition of Baltimore City. In addition, the composition of the board must reflect these criteria:

- at least four members must have extensive experience managing successful businesses, nonprofits, or government agencies;
- at least three members must have a high level of knowledge and experience in education;
- at least one member must be a parent of a Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) student; and
- at least one member must have knowledge or experience in the education of children with disabilities (including being the parent of a disabled child).

Except for the student member, members serve three-year terms and may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

**Background:** In 1997, following a consent decree approved by the Baltimore City Circuit Court regarding BCPSS, the General Assembly passed legislation (Chapter 105) establishing the Baltimore City/State Partnership and restructuring the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners. At the time, BCPSS was struggling with the poor academic performance of its students and questions about the system's administration and accountability. The partnership was created to improve the system through increased State oversight and the infusion of \$230 million in additional State operating aid from fiscal 1998 to 2002.

Chapter 105 of 1997 also required a final comprehensive evaluation of the school system by December 1, 2001. This evaluation was conducted by Westat and was presented to the General Assembly on January 17, 2002. Westat concluded that the partnership had worked well to improve student achievement and system management and recommended that the partnership continue.

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners is one of seven appointed school boards in the State, of which one (Queen Anne's County) is in the process of transitioning to an elected board. Another 17 local boards of education are elected by county voters. There are no hybrid (partially elected/partially appointed) boards in the State. The selection method and number of school board members for each of the 24 local boards are shown in **Exhibit 1**.

---

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

| <u>County</u>   | <u>Full Voting Members</u> | <u>Appointed Members</u> | <u>Elected Members From County At Large</u> | <u>Elected Members From Districts</u> | <u>Student Member(s)</u> |
|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 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                          | 0                        | 0   | 5                                     | 1                        |
| Charles         | 7                          | 0                        | 7   | 0                                     | 1                        |
| Dorchester      | 5                          | 0                        | 0   | 5                                     | 2                        |
| Frederick       | 7                          | 0                        | 7   | 0                                     | 0                        |
| Garrett         | 5                          | 0                        | 2   | 3                                     | 1                        |
| Harford         | 7                          | 7                        | 0   | 0                                     | 1                        |
| Howard          | 7                          | 0                        | 7   | 0                                     | 0                        |
| Kent            | 5                          | 0                        | 5   | 0                                     | 0                        |
| Montgomery      | 7                          | 0                        | 2   | 5                                     | 1                        |
| Prince George's | 9                          | 0                        | 4   | 5                                     | 1                        |
| Queen Anne's**  | 5                          | 5                        | 0   | 0                                     | 0                        |
| St. Mary's      | 5                          | 0                        | 1   | 4                                     | 1                        |
| Somerset        | 5                          | 0                        | 0   | 5                                     | 0                        |
| Talbot          | 7                          | 0                        | 0   | 7                                     | 1                        |
| Washington      | 7                          | 0                        | 7   | 0                                     | 0                        |
| Wicomico        | 7                          | 7                        | 0   | 0                                     | 0                        |
| Worcester       | 7                          | 0                        | 0   | 7                                     | 3                        |

\*The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners is appointed jointly by the Governor and mayor.

\*\*The Queen Anne's County board will begin transitioning to an elected board at the 2008 general election.

---

## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City, Maryland State Department of Education,  
Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 20, 2007  
ncs/rhh

---

Analysis by: Michael C. Rubenstein

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510