

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 52 (Delegate Vogel)  
Ways and Means

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Election Law - Voting Age - Board of Education Elections (Your School, Your Voice Act)

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This proposed constitutional amendment, if approved by the voters at the next general election, gives the General Assembly the power to provide, by suitable enactment, the authority of a county to lower the age at which an individual may vote in an election for the members of an elected county board of education. Contingent on the passage of the proposed amendment, and its ratification by the voters, the bill (1) authorizes a county to enact a local law that allows an individual who is at least age 16 to vote in an election for members of an elected county board of education and (2) establishes that a registered voter who is under age 18 may vote in an election for members of an elected county board of education if authorized by the county in which the individual is registered to vote.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** If the constitutional amendment is approved, general fund expenditures increase by \$149,000 in FY 2027 and may increase minimally in future years, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** If the constitutional amendment is approved, local government expenditures increase by \$149,000 in FY 2027 and may increase in future years, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

### Current Law:

#### *Voter Qualifications*

Pursuant to Article I of the Maryland Constitution, every citizen of the United States, at least age 18, who is a resident of the State is eligible to vote in the ward or election district in which they reside. The General Assembly is authorized to regulate or prohibit the right to vote of a person convicted of a serious crime or under care or guardianship for mental disability. The constitution requires individuals to be registered in order to vote.

Under State law, with certain exceptions, an individual may register to vote if the individual is a citizen of the United States, is at least age 16, and is a resident of the State as of the day the individual seeks to register. An individual younger than age 18, (1) may vote in a primary election in which candidates are nominated for a general or special election that will occur when the individual is at least age 18 and (2) may not vote in any other election.

#### *County Boards of Education*

Twenty counties have elected school boards and 4 counties have combined appointed and elected school boards. The **Appendix – Local Boards of Education Membership** shows the selection methods, terms of office, and membership of the 24 local boards of education.

### State and Local Fiscal Effect:

#### *Fiscal 2027*

If the constitutional amendment is approved by the voters (in the 2026 general election), State general fund expenditures and local government expenditures each are expected to increase by \$149,000 in fiscal 2027, reflecting the State and local boards of elections shares of (1) one-time costs for programming changes to the Agency Election Management System and the voter registration system (\$260,000 total, \$130,000 each) and (2) one-time costs for pollbook software modifications (\$38,000 total, \$19,000 each).

These changes/modifications are needed in order to allow, in counties where it is authorized, individuals under age 18 to vote in county board of education elections only, during elections when other voters are generally eligible to cast a vote for all offices/questions on the ballot. It is uncertain at this time how these costs will be divided between the State and local boards; however, for the purposes of this fiscal and policy note, it is assumed that these costs are split evenly. It is also assumed the work is begun and completed in fiscal 2027 in advance of the 2028 statewide primary election, regardless of

when, or whether, counties authorize registered voters under age 18 to vote in board of education elections, in order to have the capability available in advance. A portion of these costs may be incurred in fiscal 2028 to the extent work continues into fiscal 2028.

*Fiscal 2028 and Future Years*

If the constitutional amendment is approved by the voters, State general fund expenditures and local government expenditures also increase in fiscal 2028 and future years for costs of additional mail-in ballots and in-person ballots to the extent counties authorize registered voters under age 18 to vote in board of education elections. State general fund expenditures and local government expenditures each increase by less than \$1,000 on average per election, per county.

Local government expenditures also increase, in counties where registered voters under age 18 are authorized to vote in board of education elections, due to additional personnel costs associated with voting machine testing related to the unique ballots that are provided to under-age-18 voters. Those counties may also incur voter education costs. These additional local government expenditures, however, have not been quantified at this time.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 373 of 2024.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City; Allegany, Harford, and Wicomico counties; Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 19, 2025  
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## Appendix – Local Boards of Education Membership

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The composition of the local boards of education varies with members serving three- to four-year terms. Twenty counties have elected school boards and four counties have combined appointed and elected school boards. Twenty-two boards have student members; however, only 8 boards allow student members to vote, which generally excludes authority to vote on matters relating to collective bargaining and personnel. Three counties with voting student members also preclude student members from voting on matters relating to operating and capital budgets. **Exhibit 1** shows the selection methods, terms of office, and membership of the 24 local school boards.

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### Exhibit 1 Local Boards of Education As of January 2025

<u>School System</u>	<u>Number of Members</u>	<u>Term</u>		<u>Means of Selection<sup>1</sup></u>
Allegany	6	4 years	E	5 from county at large 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Anne Arundel	8	4 years	E	7 from councilmanic districts 1 student (one-year term)
Baltimore City	12	3 or 4 years	A/E	2 elected from city at large 9 appointed by mayor 1 student (one-year term)
Baltimore	12	4 years	A/E	4 appointed by Governor from county at large 7 elected from councilmanic districts 1 student (one-year term)
Calvert	6	4 years	E	2 from county at large 3 from commissioner districts 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Caroline	7	4 years	A/E	3 elected from school board districts 2 appointed by Governor from county at large 2 students (nonvoting, one-year term)
Carroll	11	4 years	E	5 from county at large 5 commissioners <i>ex officio</i> (nonvoting) 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Cecil	6	4 years	E	5 from commissioner districts 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)

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<u>School System</u>	<u>Number of Members</u>	<u>Term</u>		<u>Means of Selection<sup>1</sup></u>
Charles	10	4 years	E	1 from county at large 8 from commissioner districts 1 student (one-year term)
Dorchester	8	4 years	E	5 from councilmanic districts 3 students (nonvoting, one-year term)
Frederick	8	4 years	E	7 from county at large 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Garrett	6	4 years	E	2 from county at large 3 from commissioner districts 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Harford	11	4 years	A/E	6 elected from councilmanic districts 3 appointed by County Executive from county at large 1 superintendent <i>ex officio</i> (nonvoting) 1 student (one-year term)
Howard	8	4 years	E	2 from county at large 5 from councilmanic districts 1 student (one-year term)
Kent	6	4 years	E	5 from county at large 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Montgomery	8	4 years	E	2 from county at large 5 from school districts 1 student (one-year term)
Prince George's	10	4 years	E	9 from school board districts 1 student (one-year term)
Queen Anne's	7	4 years	E	1 from county at large 4 from commissioner districts 2 students (nonvoting, one-year term)
St. Mary's	6	4 years	E	1 from county at large 4 from commissioner districts 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Somerset	5	4 years	E	5 from commissioner districts
Talbot	9	4 years	E	7 from school board districts 2 students (nonvoting, one-year term)
Washington <sup>2</sup>	8	4 years	E	7 from county at large 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
Wicomico	7	4 years	E	5 from councilmanic districts 2 from county at large
Worcester	10	4 years	E	7 from commissioner districts 3 students (nonvoting, one-year term)

<sup>1</sup> E = Elected and A/E = Combined appointed and elected board: (1) in Baltimore County, members are appointed by the Governor from a list of names provided by the Baltimore County School Board Nominating Commission; (2) in Caroline County, members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate; (3) in Baltimore City, members are appointed by the mayor from a list of names provided by the Baltimore City Public School Board Community Panel; and (4) in Harford County, members are appointed by the county executive with the advice and consent of the county council.

<sup>2</sup> Although not in statute, the Washington County Board of Education reports that there is a student member on the board and that the student member can only concur on votes and must abstain from certain matters.

Source: Sections 3-101 through 3-1405 of the Education Article; Local Boards of Education

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