

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 1524

Ways and Means

(Wicomico County Delegation)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Wicomico County Board of Education - Election of Members, Student Member, and Compensation

This bill adds at least one nonvoting student member to the Wicomico County Board of Education and authorizes the board to grant a scholarship to a student member. Additionally, the bill requires that, beginning with the general election in 2026, the seven elected members of the board must each be elected from one of the seven councilmanic districts in the county. As a result, there are no at-large members of the board under the bill. The bill also authorizes the Wicomico County Council to set a salary greater than the current annual compensation amounts required for elected members (\$3,700) and board chair (\$4,000). Elected and student members are entitled to reimbursement for travel and other expenses, as provided in the county board's budget, upon submission of vouchers in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the board. A student member is not entitled to any compensation or payment beyond reimbursement for expenses incurred in their capacity as a board member and the scholarship as authorized by the county board.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: To the extent the Wicomico County Council chooses to set a salary greater than the current annual compensation amounts for elected board members and to the extent the board chooses to award scholarships to student members, Wicomico County Board of Education expenditures increase. Any reimbursement for expense vouchers of elected and student members is assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing resources of the board. The Wicomico County Board of Elections can make any needed adjustments to board member elections with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Each student member of the board must be an eleventh or twelfth grade student in good standing and regularly enrolled in the Wicomico County Public School System (WCPS). Student members must serve for a term of one year beginning July 1 after the selection of the member. Each student member is charged with advising the county board on the thoughts and feelings of students in WCPS. Unless invited to attend by an affirmative vote of a majority of the elected members of the board, the student members may not attend a closed session of the county board. The bill makes additional technical changes to distinguish between student and nonstudent (elected) members of the board.

Current Law: The Wicomico County Board of Education consists of seven nonpartisan members with one member elected from each of the five councilmanic districts in the county elected by the voters of each district and two at-large members elected by the voters of the entire county. Members are elected in gubernatorial election years and serve a term of four years until a successor is elected and qualifies.

Wicomico County Public Schools advises that there are currently four student *representatives* (typically each school's student government association president) who give presentations at board meetings on current events of interest at each of the four high schools in the county. However, such students are not *members* of the board who each sit for the entirety of board meetings and are able to ask questions or provide input on each matter before the board. Student representatives currently serve without compensation.

The Wicomico County Board of Education is one of 20 elected school boards in the State. There are also 4 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.

Each member of the Wicomico County Board of Education must receive \$3,700 annually as compensation, except for the chair of the board who must receive \$4,000 annually.

Additional Comments: Although the bill requires that members be elected from each of seven councilmanic districts, there are presently only five councilmanic districts in Wicomico County. However, Wicomico County has proposed a new [seven-member councilmanic district map](#) pursuant to a consent decree agreed to by Wicomico County and the NAACP. Accordingly, this analysis assumes that a revised seven-district councilmanic map will be finalized and implemented prior to the 2026 general election.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 1032 (Wicomico County Senators) - Rules.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland State Board of Elections; Wicomico County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 10, 2025
km/hlb Third Reader - March 31, 2025
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 31, 2025
Revised - Updated Information - March 31, 2025

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Appendix – Local Boards of Education Membership

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.

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 Selection¹</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)

<u>School System</u>	<u>Number of Members</u>	<u>Term</u>		<u>Means of Selection¹</u>
Cecil	6	4 years	E	5 from commissioner districts 1 student (nonvoting, one-year term)
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 ²	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

<u>School System</u>	<u>Number of Members</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Means of Selection¹</u>	
Worcester	10	4 years	E	7 from commissioner districts 3 students (nonvoting, one-year term)

¹ 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.

² 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
