Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 1171 (Howard County Delegation)
Ways and Means Education, Energy, and the Environment

Howard County Board of Education - Student Member - Voting
Ho. Co. 7-26

This bill expands the matters on which the student member of the Howard County Board of Education can vote on to include (1) geographical attendance areas; (2) acquisition and disposition of real property and matters relating to school construction; (3) donations; (4) condemnation; (5) consolidation of schools and transportation of students; (6) budgetary matters; and (7) student suspension and expulsion. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: None. The change is procedural in nature and does not directly affect Howard County school finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Howard County Board of Education consists of seven elected members and one student member. The school board is 1 of 20 elected boards in the State; there are also 4 hybrid boards. **Appendix – Local Boards of Education Membership** shows the selection methods, terms of office, and membership of the 24 local boards of education. All 24 local school boards have either student members or student representatives who regularly present at board meetings; 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 (including Howard County) also preclude student members from voting on matters relating to operating and capital budgets.

The student member of the Howard County Board of Education must be a county resident and an eleventh or twelfth grade student in the Howard County public school system. The student is elected by students in grades 6-11 in accordance with procedures established by the school board and serves a one-year term beginning on July 1 of each year. A student who finishes second in the election serves as the alternate student member.

The student member may vote on all matters before the board except those relating to:

- geographical attendance areas;
- acquisition and disposition of real property and matters relating to school construction;
- employment of architects;
- donations;
- condemnations;
- consolidation of schools and student transportation;
- appointment and compensation for the county superintendent;
- employee discipline and certain appeals;
- budgetary matters;
- personnel (including appointment and promotion of staff and discipline of certificated staff);
- collective bargaining; and
- student suspension and expulsion.

The student may attend a closed session of the board only if a majority of the voting members approve. Five affirmative votes are needed to pass a motion when the student member is voting; four votes are needed when the student member is not authorized to vote.

Student Member Compensation

A student member who completes a full term on the board is entitled to a $5,000 higher education scholarship which must be paid directly to the educational institution the student attends and is not considered compensation for purpose of calculating taxable income. A student member is limited to one scholarship, regardless of the number of terms served as the student member. The student member is also entitled to reimbursement for travel and

other expenses, on submission of expense vouchers. The student member is not entitled to any compensation or payment other than the scholarship and expense reimbursements.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Howard County; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 6, 2026
jg/hlb Third Reader - March 23, 2026

Analysis by: Michael E. Sousane

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

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. All 24 boards have either student members or student representatives who regularly present at board meetings; 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 2026

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

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

School System	Number of Members	Term		Means of Selection[1]
Talbot	9	4 years	E	7 from school board districts 2 students (nonvoting, 1-year term)
Washington[3]	8	4 years	E	7 from county at large 1 student (nonvoting, 1-year term)
Wicomico[4]	11	4 years	E	5 from councilmanic districts 2 from county at large 4 students (nonvoting, 1-year term)
Worcester	10	4 years	E	7 from commissioner districts 3 students (nonvoting, 1-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 Somerset County Board of Education reports that there are three nonvoting student representatives who give presentations at board meetings on current events of interest at each of the three regular high schools in the county.

[3]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.

[4] Chapter 429 of 2025 codified at least one nonvoting student member on the Wicomico County Board of Education. The Wicomico County Board of Education includes four student representatives who give presentations at board meetings on current events of interest at each of the four high schools in the county. At each meeting, one of the four student representatives sits with the regular board members on the dais for the full meeting, while other student board members come forward to speak as needed.

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