



# Maryland State Board of Education

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200 WEST BALTIMORE ST. / BALTIMORE, MD 21201-2595 / (410) 767-0467

February 25, 2021

Senator Paul G. Pinsky  
Chair, Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs Committee  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Pinsky,

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) is committed to working with any and all stakeholders to employ strategies that effectively provide equitable opportunities and seek to improve outcomes for all of Maryland's nearly 900,000 students. This commitment extends to the makeup of the State Board and how it can be best constructed to meet those goals. It is within that framework that we **support** Senate Bill 785, State Board of Education Membership and Terms - Capability and Capacity Study of Education Agencies, **with proposed amendments**.

The State Board is generally supportive of the revised timelines for appointments to the State Board that would maintain the continuity of the Board with a full Board being hypothetically maintained at all times. Furthermore, the State Board holds that the outlined qualifications are vastly held by current members of the Board and there are no substantive issues with the list of qualifications outlined in the legislation. However, the Board would request that the committee consider the below adjustments, including:

1. Page 2, After Line 30: Add, "At least one member shall be a Maryland resident who possesses a broad citizen's perspective representing Maryland taxpayers."
2. Page 3, Line 3: add, "experience with mental or physical health programs or research." We believe social emotional and health instruction have a growing importance.
3. Page 3, Line 4-6: add, "or experience with implementing successful digital learning programs." We believe that COVID-19 accelerated the importance of having a viable virtual learning option for students.
4. Page 3, Line 5: add, "or innovative public or non-public school." We believe this addition would give the Board an opportunity to leverage expertise in innovative public and non-public school settings.
5. Page 3, Line 7-9: add, "experience serving on a local board of education." We have found that having local school board experience has been invaluable in our deliberations.
6. Page 3, Line 7: Reduce the number of members from two to one to accommodate the addition of the Maryland taxpayer resident.

In regards to the requirement in Senate Bill 785 that would require the newly established Accountability and Implementation Board to contract with a consultant to study the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) ability to carry out its duties and to implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the Board does not oppose the study as it is presented in principle. In addition, the results of the study will provide important information for the new state superintendent.

However, the Board would request that the committee consider an amendment that identifies a nationally-recognized entity with the ability to carry out such a study, such as the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Having a nationally-recognized entity to conduct the study will provide the new state superintendent with stronger basis for future action. The Board would also request that the committee consider an amendment that further outlines the strategies for remediating the outcomes detailed in the final report of findings presented to the Governor and the General Assembly by the consultant that conducts the study.

Finally, the Board is concerned about the significant number of studies and reporting requirements being placed on MSDE in various pieces of prospective legislation that do not expand the capacity of the Department to provide the significant requests for information that will likely stem from such requirements in a timely manner. With this concern in mind, the Board would like to request that the committee consider these circumstances as you contemplate this and other legislation that dictate further reporting requirements for both the State Board and MSDE.

We respectfully request that you consider these proposed amendments and information as you deliberate **Senate Bill 785**. For further information, please contact Zachary Hands, at 410-767-0504, or [Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov](mailto:Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,



Clarence C. Crawford  
President, Maryland State Board of Education

cc: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Schools  
Zachary Hands, MSDE Director of Government Relations