

# **Testimony In Support of HB 465 State Superintenden**

Uploaded by: Ceruolo, Rich

Position: FAV



March, 13 2021

Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD. 21401

House Ways and Means Committee

**In Support of HB 465: State Superintendent – Qualifications and Senate Confirmation.**

Good day members of the House Ways and Means Committee.

As Parents and advocates, we fully support this bill in helping us all find a replacement State Superintendent of Schools. He/She should be fully qualified, and be able to meet the qualifications for leading our public school system(s) into the future.

Please support HB 465, and we ask that the committee return a favorable report.

Thank you for your time, and for considering our testimony today.

Mr. Richard Ceruolo  
Parent and advocate for persons living with disabilities.  
Parent Advocacy Consortium

# **HB 465--State Supt of Schools--Qualifications and**

Uploaded by: Dove, Tina

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of House Bill 465  
State Superintendent of Schools—Qualifications and Senate Confirmation

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
March 18, 2021  
1:00 pm

Tina N. Dove, M.Ed.  
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 465, legislation that would require the State Superintendent be appointed with the advice and consent of the Maryland Senate; amend the qualifications of the candidate for the position; and prohibit recent members of the State Board of Education from being appointed to the position until a period of time between their service on the Board and their appointment to the position has passed.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

One of the most significant factors determining how well our students do in school is the quality of the educator who stands in front of them every day. One of the most significant factors in the success of classroom teachers is the quality of the leader running their school building. School leaders, and their ability to be effective, can be helped or harmed by the superintendent in charge of their district. The leadership of our district superintendents is directly impacted by the state leader charged with helping to shape and guide their district leaders' overall efforts via regulatory support, policy change, administrative advocacy, and educational leadership. In short, the person selected to lead the state's educational system matters a great deal. To be successful, the state superintendent of schools needs to possess the theoretical knowledge and practical experience which will enable her/him to effectively serve as the lead educator in our state. This leader will also have to command the confidence, trust and respect of the rank and file educators across the state, the bureaucratic staff inherited at the Department, and the elected officials and members of the public.



As we grapple with the immeasurable challenges resulting from the global COVID-19 pandemic, the significant changes to education policy and funding in our state that will be enacted should the veto of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future be overturned, and the impact brought by the retirement of the current state superintendent, MSEA members are clear: the choice of the next state superintendent is critically important. We believe very strongly that this person needs to be someone with extensive educational experience—in the classroom, the school building, and the district office—who has a proven track record of being a strong, effective leader who knows and understands how to bring about policy and regulatory change as well as how best to successfully implement said change at all levels of education. House Bill 465 puts Maryland on the definitive path toward ensuring our state's next educational leader is well qualified and best suited to lead our state through that which lies ahead.

At a time when we've seen the recent departure of the most unqualified individual ever to lead the U.S. Department of Education, and when the current membership of the State Board of Education (with the exception of the appointed teacher and parent members) being composed predominantly of advocates for private, religious, and home-schools who lack any first-hand experience teaching or leading in public schools, it has never been more important to ensure that our state's chief public education advocate and leader be someone with impeccable education experience and credentials, proven educational leadership skills, and unwavering support for Maryland's public schools and public school educators.

**MSEA requests a favorable report on House Bill 465.**

# **Testimony in Support of HB465 - EHEA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Washington, Alonzo

Position: FAV

ALONZO T. WASHINGTON  
*Legislative District 22*  
Prince George's County

*Vice Chair*  
Ways and Means Committee

Chair, Education Subcommittee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB465 - State Superintendent of Schools - Qualifications and Senate Confirmation**

HB465 is a straightforward bill that changes the way the State Superintendent of Schools is appointed, and adds additional qualifications to the position. This is a reintroduction of a bill from last session which was passed by the House of Delegates, but did not receive a Senate hearing.

HB465 has two major components. First, it requires that the Superintendent be confirmed by the Senate, furthering the system of checks and balances that is crucial to democracy. Nearly one quarter of Maryland's budget is allocated for education, which is the largest portion of our state budget, so it's crucial that we have checks and balances to make sure that no one branch of government has too much say in how that money is spent. HB465 ensures that the Superintendent nominee will be held accountable to the Senate.

Second, this bill imposes a "cooldown period" of one year on members of the Board of Education before they can become the Superintendent. It's critically important that the Superintendent is the most qualified candidate for the position, but right now, current members of the Board of Education can influence other members to select them as Superintendent when the position opens up.

Members of the State Board of Education are appointed, not elected, so Marylanders have very little representation in how the members of the Board and the Superintendent are selected. The individual who leads our public school system should bring transparency and expertise to the position, not someone with connections to those who select the Superintendent. The measures included in this bill ensure that the Board will pick the strongest candidate to oversee our schools and our children.

This bill comes at a crucial period in the future of our state's educational infrastructure. With the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the next Superintendent will play a major role in the transformation of Maryland's public education system over the next decade.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB465.

**hb465statesuptdtestimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Hettleman, Kalman

Position: FWA



Kalman R. Hettleman

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HB 465 – STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT**

I am an independent education analyst and advocate and former member of the Kirwan Commission.

HB 465 commendably seeks to address the lack of accountability of the Maryland State Department of Education. Members of the General Assembly have long criticized the lack of responsiveness and transparency of MSDE. The sharp criticism of MSDE's actions, or lack of actions, during the COVID-19 crisis, is the tip of the iceberg of the dissatisfaction.

Yet, the General Assembly has been stymied in part because the State Superintendent is appointed by the State Board, without the requirement of Senate confirmation, and therefore is shielded from the General Assembly's oversight.

There is no one or easy answer to how to balance the responsibilities of the State Superintendent and the oversight of elected officials. According to the Education Commission of the States' 50-State Review (2017), there are many different options. Maryland's model in which the Governor appoints the State Board which appoints the Superintendent is followed by 12 states. Other prevalent models include the Governor's appointment of the Superintendent subject to legislative confirmation the same as other major department heads. At least three states have no governing state board.

HB 465 seeks to strike a reasonable balance. It will enable the General Assembly to exercise some authority over the appointment of the Superintendent. And equally important, it will enable parents, teachers and other stakeholders to hold the General Assembly more accountable for the overall performance of MSDE.

One possible amendment should be considered. It would require that the qualification provisions under 2-302 (c) be *preferences* rather than absolute requirements. Across the country, some of the best state and local education superintendents were persons who were not lifelong educators but had strong managerial experience and accomplishments.

Strengthening the accountability and responsiveness of MSDE has never been more important than now in the wake of the pandemic. The Blueprint and COVID response funding must be accompanied by more oversight. HB 465 is a step in that direction and a favorable report will serve the best interests of our schoolchildren.

Thank you for your consideration.

**MEC Testimony HB0465-State Superintendent 03182021**

Uploaded by: Tyler, Jr.-Chair, Rick

Position: FWA



# Maryland Education Coalition



INSPIRES ACTION & POSITIVE CHANGE SO MARYLAND'S STUDENTS SUCCEED

Rick Tyler, Jr., Chair

Web site - [www.marylandeducationcoalition.org](http://www.marylandeducationcoalition.org)

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Email - [md.education.coaliton@gmail.com](mailto:md.education.coaliton@gmail.com)

DATE: March 18, 2021

BILL: **HB0465**

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs

TITLE: State Superintendent of Schools - Qualifications  
and Senate Confirmation  
SUPPORT with Amendments

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) has been in existence for over 40 years and is made up of 20 statewide organizations & several individuals who represent parents, civil rights, & special population groups including lower income, special needs, limited English, Gifted & Talented and people of color. We advocate for adequate, equitable funding and systematic accountability for the estimated 900,000 public school students in Maryland's public schools regardless of their academic, cultural, economic, geographic, racial, or other demographic status.

MEC not only has extensive experience addressing and working with the Maryland General Assembly on a wide range of issues, but we also have decades of experience working with State Superintendents and the MSDE staff as leaders or members of MSDE stakeholder groups, councils, task forces and committees in an advisory capacity consistent with the federal ESSA requirement that ensures stakeholder participation in the decision-making process. That includes issues or actions items in front of the state board such as COMAR.

MEC joins the General Assembly in their concern with the leadership, organization, activities, and accountability of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and was among the first to publicly express concern and criticism due to the lack of state leadership, responsiveness and clear statewide guidance related to the pandemic, reopening plans and the additional services and support within their responsibilities. In recent years, the MSDE and State Board leadership appears to also relinquish some of their oversight and technical assistance responsibilities given to them by failing to consistently meet with or work with the General Assembly, local school systems and stakeholders on issues important to the quality of education of all students.

MEC seeks a reasonable balance in HB 465 by enabling the General Assembly to exercise some authority over the authority of the State Superintendent, but believe it is equally important ensure parents, teachers and other stakeholders are also part of the process to ensure systematic accountability for the performance of MSDE. MEC is also concerned that the list of required qualification may restrict eligibility of other highly qualified candidates. In addition, we would prefer a state superintendent that has successful experience working with diverse groups of learners.

MEC does not object to the list of qualifications in HB 465, but instead of requirements, we believe they should be preferences and that all leadership, management and education qualifications should be allowed to be considered. We are also aware of some examples across the nation of great state education leaders who would not meet each of the qualifications listed in HB 465.

Therefore, we support HB 465 with amendments and offer an amendment to change the word "MUST" to "SHOULD" and another REQUIRING STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS and

Respectfully yours,

Advocates for Children and Youth, American Civil Liberties Union of MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Arts Every Day, Attendance Works, CASA, Decoding Dyslexia of MD, Disability Rights MD, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, MSC-NAACP, Maryland PTA, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Ed, Maryland Out of School Time Network, Public Justice Center, Maryland School Psychologists' Association, Parent Advocacy Consortium, Right to Read MD, School Social Workers of MD, Barbara Dezmon, Kalam Hettleman, David Hornbeck, Rick Tyler, Jr., Shamoyia Gardiner, Sharon Rubinstein

# **HB 465 - OPP SBOE - State Superintendent of School**

Uploaded by: Hands, Zachary

Position: UNF



# Maryland State Board of Education

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

March 18, 2021

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

RE: **House Bill 465** - State Superintendent of Schools – Qualifications and Senate Confirmation

Dear Chair Pinsky:

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) submits this letter in opposition to House Bill (HB) 465 - State Superintendent of Schools – Qualifications and Senate Confirmation, which would require the State Superintendent of Schools to be appointed with the advice and consent of the Senate. The State Board is particularly concerned about the Bill's potential adverse unintended consequences that would require the State Board to only be able to offer an "acting" conditional State Superintendent position pending confirmation by the Senate.

If the Senate objects to the State Board's selected Superintendent and fails to confirm the appointment, the State Board's appointee would be unable to continue serving in office leaving the State an educational leadership vacuum in this time of transition implementing the complex and transformative Blueprint legislation. This impacts our current superintendent search process. While we all can agree that hiring an exceptional State Superintendent has to be one of the State's top priorities, we fear the enactment of the law, and the uncertainty that a candidate would be confirmed, will discourage top candidates from applying for the position.

Unlike recruiting for other senior professionals who apply to job postings, exceptional superintendent candidates tend not to seek out opportunities because they already have well respected positions in their current communities. Opportunities find them. Our executive search firm has warned us that the COVID-19 burnout factor among superintendents at all levels will make this year's search even more competitive. As a result, top candidates may have two or more firm job offers in hand. These top candidates tend to conduct their own thorough due diligence reviews of the prospective position, opportunities and challenges, and stability and readiness of the state board and elected officials take on and achieve extremely challenging transformative education reform. These top candidates are trying to determine if they can be successful in the prospective job assignment.

**HB 465 is already having an impact on the decision-making of top candidates.**

Several prospective top candidates, who have not made a decision on whether to apply for our position, have asked our executive search firm the following questions:

- If their selection occurs after the legislature adjourns, how long would they have to wait for Senate confirmation? What would be their interim employment status?

- Because they are already fully employed, would their names be made public during the recruitment and Senate confirmation processes?

Unfortunately, we can not speed up the current process to produce a prospective candidate for Senate confirmation before this legislative session adjourns on April 12<sup>th</sup>. As a result, the State Board would only be able to offer an “*acting*” employment position pending Senate confirmation, which may not occur until next year’s legislative session. Another complicating factor is that, by law, the State Superintendent must begin his or her term on July 1<sup>st</sup>. This means that we would be asking an exceptional superintendent candidate to leave their current employment, perhaps relocate their family and accept an “*acting*” position for several months with no guarantee of Senate confirmation. In addition, the candidate’s name will obviously be made public before he/she has a firm employment offer.

**Is unnecessary and redundant in its attempt to provide a new system of checks and balances and ensure the selection of a high quality State Superintendent**

Every member appointed to the State Board must be confirmed by the Senate of Maryland. This requirement already puts legislative oversight into the process of selecting the State Superintendent. State Board members are carefully vetted, with consideration of each individual’s character, personal and professional accomplishments, community involvement and ability to make a positive impact on the State’s public education system. The additional level of confirmation required by HB 465 is redundant and will impede the State Board’s ability to make timely decisions on behalf of Maryland and its public school students.

The General Assembly has rightfully entrusted the State Board as the oversight arm of MSDE and invested the State Board “with the last word on any matter concerning educational policy or the administration of the system.” This includes the appointment of the State Superintendent. It is worth noting that, for over 100 years, the State Board has successfully recruited and engaged exceptional individuals to provide leadership for the State and MSDE without the advice and consent of the Senate. The quality and caliber of the State Superintendents selected by the State Board has resulted in Maryland’s long standing reputation as a national leader in public education.

For the reasons stated above, the State Board respectfully urges your committee to issue an unfavorable report on **HB 465**.

For additional information or questions, please contact Zachary Hands at [Zachary.Hands1@maryland.gov](mailto:Zachary.Hands1@maryland.gov) or 410-767-0504.

Sincerely,



Clarence C. Crawford  
President, Maryland State Board of Education

cc: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Schools  
Zachary Hands