



Tracy D. Hilliard, Principal
tracy.hilliard@fcps.org

Amber James, Assistant Principal
amber.james@fcps.org

Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow!

BILL: SB0598
TITLE: State Board of Education - Membership - School Principal
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POSITION: Favorable

Good morning, Mr. Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and members of the committee. My name is Tracy Hilliard, and I am honored to address you today. I serve as the principal at Urbana Elementary School in Frederick County, and I hold the esteemed position of the current president of the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals. I stand before you with a deep sense of responsibility and pride in representing not only my school but also the collective voice of well over 600 elementary school principals spanning 24 school districts across Maryland.

I am here today to express my strong endorsement of Senate Bill 598 for the inclusion of a practicing principal on the Maryland State Board of Education. Currently, the composition of the Maryland State Board of Education is commendable in its representation of various stakeholders, including parents, students, and teachers. However, it is crucial to recognize that principals play a pivotal role in the school community, serving as leaders who directly engage with the multifaceted aspects of education.

The role of a principal in shaping the daily operations and overall direction of a school is indeed significant. As we embark on the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, principals are tasked with additional responsibilities that directly impact the school community. It is crucial to recognize that many of the decisions related to this implementation are currently being made by the Maryland State Board of Education, which only includes the voices of a student member, a parent member, and a teacher member.

While these perspectives are undoubtedly valuable, the absence of a practicing principal's voice leaves a critical gap in the representation of those responsible for executing and adapting to the policies on a day-to-day basis. Principals bring a unique set of experiences and insights into the practical implications and challenges of implementing educational initiatives.

Including a practicing principal on the Maryland State Board of Education would not only enhance the comprehensiveness of the board but also ensure that decisions made at the state level are well-informed by the realities faced by schools on the ground level. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future, being a comprehensive and transformative plan, would benefit significantly from the input of someone directly engaged in managing the intricate details of a school environment.

I urge the committee to consider the invaluable perspective that a practicing principal can bring to the Maryland State Board of Education. This inclusion would foster a more holistic understanding of the implications of policies and contribute to the successful implementation of initiatives aimed at improving Maryland's educational system.



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In conclusion, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Senators Kramer and Jackson for sponsoring Senate Bill 598. Your commitment to recognizing the importance of including a practicing principal on the State Board of Education is commendable and aligns with the principles of fairness and inclusivity.

I also extend my thanks to the members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee for facilitating today's hearing. Your time and attention to this matter are highly appreciated, and I am confident that your thoughtful consideration will contribute to the advancement of education in Maryland. We hope you'll give SB598 a favorable report.

Thank you.

Tracy Hilliard,
President
Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals