

**SB 887**

Uploaded by: Mary Pat Fannon

Position: FAV



**PSSAM**  
Public School Superintendents' Association  
OF MARYLAND

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**BILL:** SB 887

**TITLE:** County Boards of Education - Reappointment of Incumbent County Superintendent - Authorization

**DATE:** February 21, 2025

**POSITION:** Favorable

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**CONTACT:** Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports** Senate Bill 887.

This bill authorizes a county board of education to reappoint an incumbent county superintendent and authorizes a county board, at any point during the incumbent superintendent's term, to take action at a public meeting not later than March 1 of the year in which the contract is being renewed to reappoint the incumbent superintendent to serve a new term of 4 years beginning the immediately following July 1. This act shall take effect June 1, 2025.

***PSSAM supports an amendment that will be requested by Howard County that would retain a provision in current law requiring superintendents to notify local boards of their interest in reappointment by February 1 of the final year of their contract.*** This amendment retains the current open and transparent public process, and ensures productive communication between boards and their superintendents.

Under current law, except in Baltimore City and Prince George's County, local superintendents of schools of education are appointed for four-year terms. By February 1 of the year in which the term ends, the superintendent must notify the county board of their intention to be a candidate for reappointment. At a public meeting no later than March 1 of that year, the county board must decide to reappoint the incumbent superintendent.

Nationally, superintendent turnover has risen since the pandemic, with over 40% of districts experiencing at least one change between 2019-2024. In Maryland, we have seen a 75% turnover since 2019, with eighteen of the twenty-four school systems turning over at least once. Currently, there are only 6 superintendents who have served in their Maryland districts longer than 4 years.

Local superintendents serve as the chief executive and chief academic officers of their school districts. They are crucial in guiding policy, implementing curricula, managing budgets, and ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations. Due to their unique skill set, professionals who step into this role are highly qualified and experienced, but can be difficult to recruit and retain, especially in high-poverty and urban districts. Therefore, it is vital for school boards and communities to prioritize retaining effective leaders.

Longevity in the superintendency provides stability and consistency in leadership across a school district, which allows for long-term planning that creates sustainable change. Further, a superintendent with deep experience in their school district fosters strong relationships with staff, students, and the community at large.

A 2023 Seton Hall study\* study concluded that superintendent longevity positively correlates with student achievement by creating stable conditions that foster trust, collaboration, and effective leadership. This research aligned with previous research, (Grissom and Andersen, 2012), showing that short superintendent tenure disrupts academic progress, confuses leadership styles, and lowers staff morale. High turnover negatively impacts school districts by preventing the completion of long-term improvement plans and disrupting program continuity. The study highlights that superintendent stability allows for relationship-building, trust development, and alignment of school district objectives with personal goals of staff.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 887 and requests a **favorable** committee report.

\*Kravitz, Robert L., "To What Extent Does Superintendent Longevity Relate to Student Performance As Measured by Graduation Rates" (2023). Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses (ETDs). 3111. <https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/3111>

# **SB887-King-Sponsor Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Senator Nancy King

Position: FAV

NANCY J. KING  
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MAJORITY LEADER

Budget and Taxation Committee

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Education, Business, and  
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Senate Bill 887 – County Boards of Education –  
Reappointment of Incumbent County Superintendent - Authorization**

February 21, 2025

Mister Chairman and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

The position of Superintendent of Schools is a complex and crucial one, as it is the superintendent who oversees the operation of the entire school district. A superintendent sets the tone for all schools and a good superintendent requires unique skill sets including budget management, curriculum development, policy oversight, hiring, professional development, community engagement, and more. Ultimately, they must ensure that their vision translates to students receiving the best possible educational experience.

Because of their unique skill sets, qualified and experienced candidates are often hard to come by. And because continuity and consistency are so important in a school district, when a school board and a community find a good superintendent, they don't want to see them recruited away.

Under current law, superintendents of schools are appointed for a four-year term. By February 1 of the year in which the term ends, the superintendent must notify the county board of their intention to be a candidate for reappointment. And between February 1 and June 30 of that year the county board must appoint a superintendent. (Note: this applies to all Maryland county boards except Baltimore City and Prince George's.)

Senate Bill 887 will allow county boards to reappoint an incumbent superintendent at any point during the incumbent's term to serve a new term of 4 years. The board must act on the reappointment no later than March 1 and the new four-year term will begin on July 1 of that year. (Note: again, this applies to all Maryland county boards except Baltimore City and Prince George's.)

In these volatile times, keeping good leaders in place in our communities is so important for the consistency that our educators, students and community need and deserve. This legislation will help our counties maintain excellent leadership in our schools and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 887.

# **Written Testimony for SB 887\_HB 1512\_ County Boar**

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

Written Testimony for **SB 887/HB 1512**: County Boards of Education -  
Reappointment of Incumbent County Superintendent - Authorization  
- Please **VOTE NO** on this bill.

Dear Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

This bill reads "... Authorizing a county board of education to reappoint an incumbent county superintendent in a certain manner; and authorizing a county board, at any point during the incumbent superintendent's term, to take action at a public meeting not later than March 1 of the year in which the contract is being renewed to reappoint the incumbent superintendent to serve a new term of 4 years beginning the immediately following July 1...

The term of a county superintendent is 4 years beginning on July 1. A county superintendent continues to serve until a successor is appointed and qualifies...

(l) [In] SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, IN the year in which [a] AN INITIAL term begins, the county board shall appoint a county superintendent between February 1 and June 30...

AT ANY POINT DURING THE INCUMBENT SUPERINTENDENT'S TERM, THE COUNTY BOARD MAY TAKE ACTION AT A PUBLIC MEETING NOT LATER THAN MARCH 1 OF THE YEAR IN WHICH THE CONTRACT IS BEING RENEWED TO REAPPOINT THE INCUMBENT SUPERINTENDENT TO SERVE A NEW TERM OF 4 YEARS BEGINNING THE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING JULY 1...

If a county board is unable to appoint a county superintendent by July 1 of a year in which a term begins, the provisions of subsection (d) of this section apply..."

This bill will **not** improve our schools in any measurable way. Our schools are **failing** our children. Our children are **not** mastering the course material that they need to master in order to even pass their graduation exams. By passing this bill and allowing a county Board of Education to simply reappoint an incumbent Superintendent, this bill does nothing to improve our children's learning outcomes. In fact, it would hinder our children's learning outcomes. If we keep reappointing the same Superintendent over and over, even though the Superintendent has not delivered any improved learning outcomes for our children, we are simply continuing the biggest source of the problem. We need to hold our County school system Superintendents accountable for the improvement in learning outcomes for our children! If our children's standardized test

scores do not improve, we need to find a different Superintendent with some different ideas to improve our children's learning outcomes. Our children deserve schools that are focused on academics and not failed leadership, political agendas and tenure for teachers whose students are not learning. If our Special Education departments are not improving the quality of their efforts for our most vulnerable populations, then we need to appoint different Superintendents. If our children are not safe in their schools, we need to appoint different Superintendents. **All** our children deserve only the best learning environments.

Therefore, please **VOTE NO** on this bill.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals

A Very Concerned Mother of 3 and Maryland Resident