



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

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>