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Education, Energy, and
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Executive Nominations Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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The Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
SB 174 – State Board of Education – Enforcement Procedures -
Alteration

Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the distinguished Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee for this opportunity to present Senate Bill 174 – State Board of Education – Enforcement Procedures – Alteration, as amended.

SB 174 would require the State Board of Education to establish an appeals process, not to exceed 90 days, regarding the removal of a county superintendent or a member of the county board of education. Under this legislation, an appeals process may exceed 90 days if due process demands the extension or the State Board determines that an extension is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety. The clarifying amendment, per the request of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, incorporates the local board member removal process.

By way of background, the Maryland State Board of Education amended COMAR 13A.01.02 this Interim, which allows the State Superintendent to stay the actions of a local board indefinitely with no time limitations should the actions of a local board be appealed. The presumption is that the stay would be lifted once the appeal process is complete, but there are currently no reasonable time limits on the appeals process, with many appeals taking far longer than six months and up to years to resolve.

I recognize that the amendments to COMAR 13A.01.02 close a gap in the authority of the State Superintendent to stay local board actions when such actions are appealed, and understand the need to prevent a cycle of starting and stopping implementation of local board decisions, a cycle which often leaves a school community with major disruption and loss of trust in the school system.

However, I have remained concerned that a lengthy, indefinite appeals process causes that same level or greater disruption to the local school system leading to a negative impact on student learning. With the implementation of the Boards amendments, local school systems face long-term uncertainty, especially if the decision being appealed is a removal of leadership.

On September 8th, 2025, I wrote to the leadership of the Maryland State Board of Education highlighting my deep concern that the proposed amendments to COMAR Title 13A, Subtitle 01,

Chapter 5 further complicate an already complex set of procedural steps for appeals of local board decisions that translates to appeals that can, and often do, take months or even years before the process is complete.

Prolonged uncertainty regarding leadership can ripple across an entire school system, taking away valuable resources from the core mission of educating students. We need to think about these disruptions from the perspective of the students, teachers, and school personnel.

This narrow legislation would set a standard timeframe to complete the appeals process specifically for cases involving the termination of a local Superintendent or removal of a local board of education member, while still allowing extensions for due process or public health and safety, and prioritizes our students.

I want to acknowledge the Maryland State Board of Education leadership in working with me on our shared objective of streamlining the current appeals process while balancing critical due process for all parties in the appeal.

In response to my September 8th letter and other comments, the Maryland Board of Education has conducted a review of the current appeals process and timeline through a different section of COMAR (13A.01.05 Appeals to the State Board) “to address potential expedience for sensitive appeals such as requests for removal of local board members and the termination of superintendents.”

Further, I understand that the Maryland State Board of Education has “begun promulgating changes that would give the State Board greater flexibility to move quickly where it is appropriate while consolidating certain time periods” and “developing regulations to embed due process for appeals related to termination of local superintendents.” I appreciate these ongoing efforts of the Maryland State Board of Education to accelerate appeals to the State Board.

The State Board also has brought to my attention the extended timelines involved when the State Board must refer termination and removal appeals cases to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH). I have asked the State Board for recommendations on striking the balance between due process and a reasonable timeline when these sensitive appeals cases are referred to OAH.

In closing, my intent and motivation in introducing this legislation, Senate Bill 174, is to significantly improve and tighten up the current open-ended, lengthy appeals process of terminations of superintendents and removals of board of education members to ensure, to the extent possible, swift resolution of these appeals to prevent these major disruptions to student learning and the overall school system as a whole and to better serve our students, teachers, school personnel, and local community.

I thank you for your kind attention and consideration, and I respectfully request a favorable and very swift report on SB 174.