



**TO:** Chair Brian J. Feldman , Vice Chair Cheryl C. Kagan , and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Jayson J. Green, Chair, Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB)

**DATE:** March 9, 2026

**BILL:** SB0554 - Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners - Appointment Process - Alterations

**POSITION:** OPPOSE / UNFAVORABLE

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jayson J. Green, and I serve as the Chair of the Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB) for Baltimore City Public Schools. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of PCAB to strongly urge an **UNFAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 554.

SB0554 proposes the complete elimination of the Baltimore City Public School Board Community Panel, stripping parents, educators, students, and community advocates of our statutorily mandated voice in the school board appointment process. We fiercely oppose this legislation for the following reasons:

### **1. A Direct Threat to Community Voice and Our Democratic Way of Life**

Currently, the Community Panel guarantees a seat at the table for a broad, expert cross-section of our city. This includes PCAB, the Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City (ASCBC), the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU), the PTA, the Public School Administrators and Supervisors Association (PSASA), AFSCME, charter school representatives, the ACLU, Disability Rights Maryland, and the Fund for Educational Excellence.

Shielding these vital stakeholder groups from the appointment process is detrimental to the success of our schools and an affront to our democratic way of life. Denying community members a vote in vetting the individuals who govern their children's education is a profound problem that disenfranchises the very people this system is supposed to serve.

### **2. The False Narrative Surrounding the Community Panel's Process**

Proponents of this bill, including its sponsor, have publicly argued that the Community Panel overly restricts the Mayor's ability to choose school board members. This shows a fundamental misunderstanding of how our panel actually operates.

Every organization on the Community Panel has an equal vote. No single group possesses more voting power than another. Our sole goal is to thoroughly vet and vote for the best possible candidates based strictly on their qualifications and their proven dedication to supporting the students, families, and staff of Baltimore City Public Schools.

Furthermore, the argument that this process forces the Mayor's hand is factually incorrect. Over the last three appointment cycles, the Community Panel voted for and submitted our top-tier candidates. In all three instances, the Mayor did *not* select our top three choices; instead, the Mayor's office utilized its discretion to choose the



candidates they preferred from the broader qualified pool. The panel does not dictate the Mayor's choice; it simply acts as a necessary, democratic safeguard to ensure the community has vetted the pool of candidates.

### **3. The Hypocrisy of Reversing Local Control**

Just nine years ago, then-Delegate Antonio Hayes sponsored House Bill 562. That legislation was built on the premise that Baltimore City deserved local control. He successfully fought to remove the Governor from our school board appointments and proudly created this very Community Panel to ensure that parents and anchor institutions had a mandated voice.

It is deeply hypocritical that Senator Hayes is now dismantling his own legacy. By attempting to tear down the community panel he created, he is backtracking on his previous commitment to local empowerment and attempting to hand confirmation power over to the State Senate. Baltimore City families were the "points of strength" he championed in 2017—it is unacceptable to silence us in 2026.

### **4. An Unfair Double Standard and the "State Funding" Excuse**

If passed, SB0554 would make Baltimore City the *only* school district in the State of Maryland subjected to State Senate confirmation for its local school board appointments.

Some have argued that the state's financial contribution to city schools justifies this state-level overreach. This is fundamentally flawed. Under the Kirwan blueprint, school funding is tied to student needs, not the governance whims of adults. State funding should never be used as a paternalistic excuse to strip a local, predominantly Black and Brown community of its democratic voice. We find it highly contradictory that state legislators champion local control for the Baltimore Police Department while simultaneously attempting to seize state control of our local school board.

### **5. A Shielded and Opaque Process**

Finally, we must note on the record that this bill initially advanced through the City Senate Delegation without any public notice to stakeholders. More than 70,000 families and young people depend on city schools, yet this process was shielded from the public, depriving us of our right to provide opposition testimony when it mattered most.

True equity means trusting communities to vet their own leaders. We cannot allow our voices to be erased from the school board appointment process to satisfy political maneuvering.

For these reasons, I respectfully request an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB0554.

Sincerely,

**Jayson J. Green**

Chair, Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB)  
Baltimore City Public Schools