

March 9, 2026

Senate Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: Letter of Opposition, SB 554, Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners - Appointment Process - Alterations**

We are current and former Baltimore City Schools families, teachers, school leaders, and community advocates who believe that the success of young people and schools requires more involvement in the classroom and at the ballot box, not less. As such, we write to respectfully request an unfavorable report on SB 554, Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners - Appointment Process - Alterations by this Committee.

Baltimore City stands alone in Maryland. We are the *only* jurisdiction with a supermajority appointed school board and the only one where members are expected to serve in a volunteer capacity.<sup>1 2</sup>

We are deeply concerned that Senator Antonio Hayes and the Baltimore City Senate Delegation voted to advance SB554 – a bill that would eliminate parent, student, union, elected, and disabled voices from the appointments process – without any notice to constituents in Baltimore City and without formal notice to at least some of the groups named to the current Community Panel.. Indeed, the website and social media pages for the Senate Delegation have not been updated in over a year.

As Senator Hayes [noted](#), Baltimore City does rely on the state for the majority of its funding. But that is hardly unique. [Four jurisdictions receive more than Baltimore City and 13 others receive more than half their funding from the state.](#) Under Kirwan, school funding is tied to student needs, not the governance whims of adults. Senator Hayes should know - he voted for the bill to change the funding formula.

Despite Senator Hayes' apparent knowledge of the “points of strength” within our city and his pledge to “leverage our strengths to support the next generation,” [on his campaign website](#), Hayes’ bill cuts out the

---

<sup>1</sup> As of January 2026, only four of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions have any appointed school board members; the remaining 20 jurisdictions are entirely elected. Apart from Baltimore City, the three jurisdictions with a combination of elected and appointed members are: Baltimore County, in which four (4) of 12 members are appointed by the Governor from a list of names provided by the Baltimore County School Board Nominating Commission that serves a similar function as Baltimore City’s Community Panel; Caroline County, in which two (2) of the five (5) voting members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate; and Harford County, in which three (3) of the 11 members are appointed by the County Executive with the advice and consent of the County Council.

<sup>2</sup> All other school boards offer members a salary, reimbursement, or a salary and reimbursement. For example, Boards with a similar number of students include Montgomery County \$25,000 (member), \$29,000 (President); Prince George’s County, \$18,000 and up to \$7,000 in Board-approved expenses; Howard County, \$15,000; Anne Arundel County, \$8,000 (member); \$9,000 (Vice-chair), \$10,000 (Chair). Although there was a report as the result of Chapter 765, Maryland Laws of 2023, that [recommended compensation](#), none was forthcoming. As a result, all Baltimore City Board members remain unpaid.

anchor institutions and community organizations he previously lauded. Just nine years ago, then Delegate Hayes sponsored [HB562](#), which removed the Governor from the school board appointments process and created the Community Panel to review nominees and make recommendations to the Mayor.

Baltimore City families do not need the paternalism of Maryland Senate approval to govern our schools. Instead we deserve what every other community in the state already enjoys: direct democratic engagement. We regret that Senator Hayes and his colleagues do not agree.

Melissa Schober, MPM  
Baltimore City School Parent (Class of 2026)  
Former Disability Rights Maryland appointee to the Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB)  
Former Mayoral Appointee to the Baltimore City Community Schools Steering Committee  
Former Director, Office of School Health, Maryland Department of Health  
[melissa.schober@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.schober@gmail.com)

Jesse Schneiderman, Ed.D.  
Baltimore City Schools Parent (Class of 2039)  
Former Baltimore City Schools Teacher  
Assistant Professor of Education, Stevenson University  
[jesseschneiderman@gmail.com](mailto:jesseschneiderman@gmail.com)

Aimee Harmon-Darrow  
Baltimore City Schools Parent (Classes of 2026 and 2031)  
Founder, Creative City Public Charter  
[Amdarrow@gmail.com](mailto:Amdarrow@gmail.com)

Corey Gaber  
City Schools Teacher  
Baltimore Teachers Union Field Organizer  
[cbgaber@gmail.com](mailto:cbgaber@gmail.com)

Rachel Duncan  
Baltimore City School Parent (Classes of 2027 and 2029)  
Former Secretary and Treasurer of the Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB)  
[rachelduncan1515@gmail.com](mailto:rachelduncan1515@gmail.com)

Benjamin H. Grimaldi  
Baltimore City Schools Student  
Legislative Affairs Director of the Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City (ASCBC)  
[Benjamin.h.grimaldi@gmail.com](mailto:Benjamin.h.grimaldi@gmail.com)

Ethan Eblaghie

Baltimore City Schools Alumni (Class of 2024)  
Former Student Commissioner of Baltimore City Schools  
[ethan.cacpoly@gmail.com](mailto:ethan.cacpoly@gmail.com)

Bryan Appel  
Teacher and Parent, Baltimore City Public Schools  
804-332-1732

Joel Pally  
Teacher, Chemistry  
Western High School, Baltimore City Public Schools  
[pallyjoel@gmail.com](mailto:pallyjoel@gmail.com)

Whitney Levandusky  
Baltimore City Schools Parent (Classes of 2037 and 2040)  
[Whit.levandusky@gmail.com](mailto:Whit.levandusky@gmail.com)

Ishai Barnoy  
Current Parent and Former Teacher, Baltimore City Schools  
[ishaiarnoy@gmail.com](mailto:ishaiarnoy@gmail.com)

Jayson J. Green  
Chair, Parent & Community Advisory Board (PCAB) for Baltimore City Public Schools  
[jgreen@bcps.k12.md.us](mailto:jgreen@bcps.k12.md.us)

[An additional 53 signatories may be found here at Change.org](#)