

Senate Bill 554 – Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners – Appointment Process – Alterations
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Unfavorable as Written

March 11, 2026

The Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools (MAPCS) respectfully submits this testimony regarding **Senate Bill 554**.

MAPCS is the statewide nonprofit organization that supports and advocates for Maryland's public charter schools. In Baltimore City, charter schools serve thousands of students and families and operate as public schools within the Baltimore City Public Schools system. As such, charter school communities have a strong interest in the governance and oversight of the district.

We appreciate the sponsor's focus on strengthening accountability and transparency in the appointment process for the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners. Ensuring strong leadership for Baltimore City Public Schools is critically important for students, families, and educators across the district.

MAPCS does, however, have concerns about the bill's elimination of the **Baltimore City Public School Board Community Panel**. The Community Panel plays an important role in ensuring that a broad coalition of stakeholders—including parents, educators, and community organizations—participates in identifying and recommending qualified candidates for service on the Board.

MAPCS currently serves on this panel and values the opportunity to contribute the perspective of Baltimore's public charter school community. Charter schools are an important part of the district's public education landscape, and their students and families benefit when a wide range of voices helps inform the board selection process.

Rather than eliminating the Community Panel, MAPCS encourages consideration of a structure that **preserves the Community Panel while incorporating the additional legislative oversight contemplated in SB 554**. For example, maintaining the panel's role in vetting and recommending candidates while adding Senate confirmation of appointments could strengthen accountability while preserving meaningful community engagement.

Additionally, the General Assembly may wish to consider whether **legislative representation on the Community Panel** could further strengthen the process while maintaining the valuable role of community stakeholders.

This type of approach would ensure that **both community voices and legislative oversight** remain part of the process for selecting members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners.

For these reasons, MAPCS respectfully urges the committee to **consider amendments to SB 554 that preserve the Community Panel while enhancing legislative participation and oversight**, and absent such amendments, to give the bill an unfavorable report.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools