

HB 828: State Board of Education - Membership - Educational Support Member:
Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Ways & Means Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE HB 828**, *State Board of Education - Membership - Educational Support Member*.

HB 828 would alter the membership of the State Board of Education by adding a dedicated "educational support member" — a **noncertificated**, nonsupervisory public school employee **selected via an election among bargaining unit members** and appointed by the Governor. While I recognize the valuable contributions of educational support professionals (such as paraeducators, custodians, and other staff) to our schools, this change is unnecessary and could undermine the Board's effectiveness and impartiality.

The State Board of Education is tasked with setting statewide policy, regulations, and standards for all aspects of public education. Its current composition already includes a teacher member to represent classroom educators, along with appointees intended to provide broad, diverse perspectives focused on the overall interests of students, families, and the public. Adding a specific seat reserved for a union-affiliated bargaining unit employee introduces a direct special-interest representative into what should remain a policy-focused, nonpartisan body. **This risks shifting the Board's priorities toward labor-specific concerns (e.g., wages, working conditions, or bargaining issues) rather than student achievement, curriculum quality, accountability, or fiscal responsibility.**

Moreover, the proposed election process among educational support professionals statewide could politicize appointments and favor organized labor interests over the broader educational community. **Maryland already has mechanisms for input from support staff through unions, advisory councils, and public comment periods—expanding the Board's size and mandating a representational seat for one employee category sets a problematic precedent that could lead to demands for additional reserved seats from other groups.**

The Board should remain focused on evidence-based, student-centered governance without structural changes that embed advocacy roles for specific workforce segments. For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against HB 828**.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals