

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
Senate Bill 554 - Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners - Appointment
Process – Alterations**

April 1, 2026

This legislation would repeal the Baltimore Community Panel that currently makes recommendations of board appointments to the Mayor. The bill would also require a notice sent to entities, community associations, etc. to allow them to present at the hearing and, if wanted, to rank those candidates for Board appointment. As drafted with the amendments, the Mayor must select the appointed member (s) not less than 7 days after the hearing AND members be confirmed by the entire Senate of Maryland. As currently drafted, the Baltimore City School Board's legal counsel finds that the statutory provisions and procedures for senate confirmation address those appointed by the Governor and not someone appointed by a local official, such as a Mayor. See some relevant citations below:

- Maryland Constitution, Article II, Section 11
- MD Code, State Government, § 17-109 – state office vacancy
- [Senate Executive Nominations Brochure](#)

If this is accurate, there is concern that the Senate confirmation must occur prior to allowing a board member to take the seat.

Additionally, senate confirmation would also mean that Baltimore City would be the only school district in the State that would be locally appointed (by the Mayor) and be subject to senate confirmation. This matter is concerning as it is sending the school appointment process board backwards and removing local control. When the school board was reconstituted in 1997, the board members were appointed jointly by the Governor and the Mayor, and there was no senate confirmation. The Governor's role was removed in 2017 and the Mayor currently solely appoints from a list recommended by a community panel.

There have been some discussions that because City Schools receives a large percentage of its budget from the State as a possible reason for a greater State role in the selection of members. There are other school districts in the State that receive similar, if not more of a percentage of their budget from the State. As we know, state education funding is based on relative wealth and enrollment. Those school districts with a large population that is deemed less wealthy receive greater State funding. Baltimore City is a large and poor

district, evidenced by the fact that we participate in a program which allows all school children to eat for free because of our poverty rate.

As an example, Wicomico County receives around 80% of their school budgets from the State and those members are not confirmed by the State Senate. Allegany County receives approximately 78% of its budget from the State and there is no senate confirmation. Somerset County receives approximately 82% of its budget from the State and there is no senate confirmation.

Also, in our review of other City entities that go through senate confirmation, such as the Baltimore City Liquor Board or the Board of License, those members are appointed by the Governor and receive compensation for their board roles.

Additionally, while this new legislation would provide \$10,000 to each board member and a \$10,000 scholarship to the student member, the task force charged with looking at compensation for the Baltimore City School Board in 2024 recommended \$20,000 for the Chair, \$18,500 for the Vice Chair and \$18,000 for the board members.

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners hopes that you keep this information in mind as you deliberate this legislation.

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