

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Opposition of House Bill 1288 –
County Boards of Education – Appointed Members in Leadership Positions- Prohibition**

March 11, 2026

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners strongly opposes House Bill 1288 as legislation that would violate the individual purview and rights under the law of the school board to select its own leadership to guide the Baltimore City Public School System.

This bill prohibits an appointed member to a local board of education from serving in a leadership position. Leadership under this legislation is defined as a president, vice president, or vice chair. The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners consists of 12 members (including one student member); 9 of the members are appointed by the Mayor from recommendations submitted to the Mayor from a community panel. **Because three fourths of the school board is comprised of appointed members (9 members out of 12)** and only two adult members are elected, this would mean, in Baltimore City, that only elected members could serve in a leadership role, regardless if they would have been recently elected and have no background or historical knowledge of the operations of the school system.

Currently, the Chair and Vice Chair of the school board are appointed members and are serving a two year term. Practically speaking, this legislation would undermine the ability of this board to function properly by restricting who may serve in a leadership role. In fact, under current law, the selection of the appointed members in Baltimore City bring about certain expertise in their roles that make them absolutely primed to serve in leadership positions. By law, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners is made up of the following 9 appointed members:

- 4 members with business expertise of running a successful business;
- 3 members with education expertise;
- One parent; and
- One member with special education expertise.

It would be a travesty if those appointed members, with such expertise were never allowed to be in leadership roles on the school board.

Maryland is made of 20 school boards that are fully elected and four are a hybrid (elected and appointed). Restricting Baltimore City from selecting its own leadership from all that are on the

school board, particularly since there are only 2 elected adult members, would undoubtedly be prejudicial to the operations the school board in Baltimore City.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners urges an unfavorable report.

Dawana Merritt Sterrette, Esq.
Executive Director, Legislative and Government Affairs
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
443-250-0190