

**Testimony of the  
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners  
In Opposition of  
House Bill 140 - County Boards of Education and Baltimore City Board of School  
Commissioners - Vacancy Procedures – Alterations**

**February 5, 2026**

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners understands that sponsors need to ensure that there are no vacancies on a public school board for an extended period of time. However, the current manner in which vacancies are filled in Baltimore City works appropriately.

This legislation, as written, would require an election if a person resigns more than 55 days prior to the candidate filing deadline. It also requires each county board and the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners to appoint a replacement for a vacant elected board member position that occurs 54 days or less before a certain candidate filing deadline. Specifically for the Baltimore City School Board, our elections for the 2 elected members is citywide. Additionally, the school board is a hybrid school board, 2 elected from a citywide vote, 1 student board member elected from students in grades 9-12 and 9 appointed. The 9 appointed members have specific criteria in which to qualify to be on the board. That criteria is: a) four members must have high level management experience in large businesses, non-profits or government; b). three members must have high-level expertise in education; c). one member must have knowledge or experience in the Comer of children with disabilities; d). one member must be a parent of a student currently enrolled in City Schools; and e) one currently enrolled student member elected from students in grades 9-12).

For community involvement and transparency, currently, the Baltimore City Community Panel, comprised of the following community members makes a recommendation to the Mayor for any vacancies of an appointed or elected member. The community panel consists of:

The Baltimore Teachers Union

The Mayor's Office

The Baltimore City Council Education and Youth Committee

The Baltimore City Public School Administrators and Supervisors Association

The Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools

The Downtown Baltimore Family Alliance

A parent member of the PTA Council of Baltimore City

The Fund for Educational Excellence

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

The Associate Student Congress of Baltimore City  
The American Civil Liberties Union  
The Parent and Community Advisory Board; and  
Disability Rights of Maryland

This cross section of individuals ensures that public voices are considered. Removing the Community Panel from selecting individuals, would then require school board members, who in Baltimore are strictly unpaid volunteers to sift through resumes, conduct interviews, which would be time consuming when the current mechanism is established to do this work. Or, in the alternative, the Human Capital Office would need to dedicate staff to sift through resumes and work with the school board to conduct interviews, which again is time consuming when there is already a mechanism in the law that establishes how to appoint vacancies.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners opposes House Bill 140 and urges an unfavorable report.

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