



BILL: Senate Bill 529
TITLE: State Board of Education – Membership – Teachers and Parent
DATE: February 13, 2019
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
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Senate Bill 529 alters the membership of the State Board of Education to add two regular members who are certified teachers and a parent of a student enrolled in a public school in the State; authorizing teacher members to be appointed to the State Board although the individuals are subject to the authority of the State Board; requiring a certain list submitted to the Governor by the State Department of Education to consist of the two teacher members who received the highest number of votes after an election by teachers in the State; etc.

PSSAM opposes Senate Bill 529.

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) was organized in 1864 and has general control and supervision over public schools and the educational interests of the State. The State Board consists of a 12-member body appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the State Senate. Eleven members serve staggered four-year terms. A student member serves a one-year term.

Among other responsibilities, the State Board sets the educational policy and standards for pre-kindergarten through high school, passes regulations that have the force of law, and interprets the meaning and intent of the law. In addition, through an appeal process, the State Board also reviews and makes decisions on controversies and disputes that arise from each of Maryland's 24 school systems. Members of the State Board come from all regions of the State. It is important that they have outstanding credentials with various backgrounds and expertise that will fully represent Maryland's public school educators, advocates, students, parents, and the community-at-large.

Local superintendents believe that it is not necessary to micromanage the appointments to the State Board. We do not see any benefit in increasing State Board membership from 12 to 15. The State Board has consistently represented our constituents, including teachers and parents. Here are a few examples of current State Board members who are effectively representing the voice of teachers and parents.

Vermelle Greene, Ph.D., is a retired educator from Prince George's County Public Schools with more than 44 years of service (teaching at the elementary through college levels). She has conducted professional development and training workshops as well as online classes for thousands of teachers and administrators from coast to coast. Her focus areas include closing the gender achievement gap, educating for character, and managing classrooms effectively. Stephanie R. Iszard has over 25 years of classroom and administrative experience in the public and private sectors of education. She has served as a math instructor, Dean of Students, Instructional Council Member for developing curriculum, and parent/student/teacher conflict ombudsman. Her passion is getting parents and communities involved in the educational process.

Finally, Justin M. Hartings, Ph.D., President of the Maryland State Board of Education is a parent with three children attending Washington County Public Schools. He was elected in 2008 and 2012 to the Washington County Board of Education, serving as president for two years and vice president for three. During his tenure, Washington County Public Schools opened the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts, the first public-private partnership public school construction project in Maryland, implemented the first of its kind county-wide digital learning plan for k-12 students, and developed a Hagerstown downtown partnership between Washington County Schools, the Maryland Theater, and the University System of Maryland – Hagerstown.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **opposes** Senate Bill 529 and urges an unfavorable committee report.