



Briefing Paper: Modernizing the Baltimore City Public School Board

Support SB 31 and HB 153, Giving Students and the Community a Real Say in Governance of Our Public Schools

Maryland subscribes to the basic principle that its democratic institutions, including its local school boards, operate best when the people invested in its success have the most prominent voice in how those institutions are governed. Unfortunately, the Baltimore City Public School Board operates under provisions that diminish meaningful input from the students and communities that it serves. SB 31 and HB 153 propose to make changes to the board to allow more meaningful participation from students and community members in the key decisions of the board.

- Currently, Baltimore City students do not have the power to directly choose their representative on the school board. These bills allow middle and high school students that opportunity.
- Unlike student board members in other county boards, Baltimore City student board members are currently barred from voting on board discussions such as school closures and zoning changes, among the most consequential decisions a school board can make for students. These bills give the student member of the board a vote on issues such as these in Baltimore.
- Baltimore City is one of only two school boards in Maryland that does not offer monetary compensation to its school board members. Because of the demands placed on Baltimore City School Board Commissioners, which require attendance at frequent and late-evening meetings and undivided attention to school board policy matters, the lack of financial compensation for these full-time positions limits the pool of voices that can participate in board decisions to a wealthy few.
- SB 31 and HB 153 would create a task force to study the potential to compensate Baltimore School Board members, to be in alignment with every other local school system in the state.
- These bills passed the legislature last year, but were unfairly vetoed by the Governor.

Please support SB 31 and HB 153



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