



**Task Force to Study Compensation and Student Members of the  
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners**

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**Report**

**Baltimore, Maryland  
March 2024**

**For further information regarding this Report, contact:**

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March 29, 2024

The Honorable Wes Moore  
Governor of Maryland  
Maryland State House  
Annapolis Maryland 21401

The Honorable Bill Ferguson  
President of the Senate  
Maryland State House  
Annapolis Maryland 21401

The Honorable Adrienne Jones  
Speaker of the House  
Maryland State House  
Annapolis Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

On behalf of the Task Force to Study Compensation and Student Members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners (the “Task Force”), I am writing to transmit to you the Task Force’s Report.

The Task Force was established pursuant to Acts of Maryland 2023, Chapter 765 – House Bill 153. The charges to the Task Force, as set forth in the legislation, were:

1. Study the compensation of members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, including the student members;
2. Study the possibility and effect of adding a second student member to the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners; and
3. Make recommendations regarding the amount of and revenue stream for any proposed compensation to begin with the Baltimore City budget for fiscal year 2025.

In order to carryout these charges, the Task Force met several times between January and March 2024. During Task Force meetings, Task Force Members discussed and reviewed our values that guided our work, publicly-

submitted information, compensation and composition data provided by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education via the Mayor's Office of Children and Family Success, and discussed what equitable compensation would look like considering financial constraints. Additionally, we discussed the possibility and effect of adding an additional student member to the Board of School Commissioners. In the course of discussion, we had the opportunity to hear from the current and immediate-past student commissioners. The report submitted to you contains the Task Force's final recommendations.

The Task Force remains available to answer further questions concerning our process and recommendations. The Task Force is confident that our recommendations, if implemented, would allow for all parties involved to have the necessary time to prepare for modifications. These recommendations would better furnish the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners in its oversight of Baltimore City Public Schools and place the Board on par with the other 23 jurisdictions in Maryland as it works to serve the District and its approximately 76,000 students.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in gold ink, reading "Cody L. Dorsey".

Cody L. Dorsey  
Chair

Task Force to Study Compensation and Student Members  
of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners

Cc: The Honorable Brandon Scott, Mayor of Baltimore  
The Honorable Nick Mosby, President of the City Council  
Mr. Ronald McFadden, Chair, Board of School Commissioners  
The Honorable Stephanie Smith, Chair, Baltimore City House Delegation

# **Task Force to Study Compensation and Student Members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners**

## **Membership Roster**

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**Mr. Cody L. Dorsey, Chair**

**Appointed by the President of the Senate:**

The Honorable Jill Carter, Esq.

**Appointed by the Speaker of the House:**

The Honorable Melissa Wells

**Appointed by the Mayor of Baltimore:**

Mr. Cody L. Dorsey

Ms. Allison Mente

Mr. Jarrod Wilson

**Appointed by the President of the City Council:**

Mr. D’Juan Neal

Mr. Braxton Street

**Appointed by the Chair of the Board of School Commissioners:**

Mr. Andrew Coy

Mrs. Khalilah Slater-Harrington

**Task Force Staff Liaisons:**

Ms. Noell Lugay, Mayor’s Office of Children and Family Success

Mr. Dominic McAlily, Mayor’s Office of Government Relations

## **Findings and Recommendations**

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### **Study compensation of school board members, including the student member:**

The Task Force studied the compensation of all School Boards in the State of Maryland. The compensation varies based on jurisdiction. In Baltimore City — one of the five largest jurisdictions — School Board members receive no compensation. The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners is the only School Board in Maryland that receives no compensation.

At our February 17<sup>th</sup> Task Force Meeting, those members present voted unanimously in agreement that the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners should be compensated considering the significant direction and oversight that the Board of School Commissioners provides to Baltimore City Public Schools. In reviewing the Board's public meeting and committee meeting calendar, it is clear that a significant amount of time must be devoted in order to effectively serve in this role. Additionally, Commissioners conduct school visits and participate in public events. It is important to provide some level of compensation to ensure that those who are qualified have an equitable opportunity to serve and those potential candidates for the Board can ponder interest in applying.

### **Study the possibility and effect of adding a second student member to the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners:**

The Task Force firmly believes that the student voice is critical in all decisions made in a local school district. In Maryland, student members are able to engage various levels of policies that come before the boards. Every school district in Maryland provides a platform for student input on how that district is governed, including through full voting rights, partial voting votes, or non-voting rights. In Wicomico County, the School Board does not have a student member, but rather four student representatives representing four high schools that highlight the perspective of students, but cannot vote. Somerset County also employs the model of one student representative from each public high school. Three other jurisdictions on the Eastern Shore – Queen's Anne, Talbot, and Worcester Counties – each have more than one student member on their school boards. These are the instances of multiple students contributing to School Boards in Maryland.

The Task Force had the opportunity to hear from the current Baltimore City Student Commissioner, as well as representatives from the Baltimore Teacher's Union and the

Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City on the matter of adding an additional student member. We also heard from our fellow Task Force Members who currently serve on the Board of School Commissioners.

Considering the feedback received, we are of the opinion that an additional student member or student representative can elevate the student voice and allow for a thought-partner to the student commissioner in the current configuration of the Board of School Commissioners.

However, considering that the student commissioner's voting rights were recently expanded and the Board has recently undergone reconfiguration adding two elected members, we recommend that if an additional student member is added, that it shall take place no sooner than the 2027 school year allowing for the School Board to be reconfigured after the next statewide election.

**Make recommendations regarding the amount of and revenue stream for any proposed compensation to begin with the Baltimore City budget for fiscal year 2025:**

In line with our belief that the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners should be compensated and recognizing that Baltimore City Public Schools has unique challenges and opportunities as a large, urban school district, the Task Force recommends the following in terms of compensation beginning in fiscal year 2025:

The Chair of the Board of School Commissioners: \$20,000;

The Vice Chair of the Board of School Commissioners: \$18,500

The other commissioners: \$18,000; and

The Student Commissioner: Can elect whether to be compensated during or after term, to receive an academic scholarship after term, or a combination of both totaling \$15,000. This is an intentional recommendation, after hearing public comment on the matter. There may be instances that the student commissioner receiving compensation may increase the household income, thus impacting social welfare benefit qualifications. If the student member elects to receive an academic scholarship, the entity providing compensation may place the funds in a Maryland 529 Plan account.

In the first two fiscal years (allowing for a transition period of an uncompensated to a compensated Board), the State of Maryland shall support the compensation. Thereafter, Baltimore City Public Schools shall make an annual allocation in support of the compensation of the School Board within the Board Office budget.

Further, we recommend that a Compensation Commission for the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners be established. Every four years, a Compensation Commission may consider and recommend to the Governor and General Assembly any changes in the compensation of the School Board Commissioners. These recommendations should take into consideration assisting with attracting qualified candidates and the ability for Commissioners to serve without financial hardship.