

2022 Delegation Report

Overview

Delegates and Senators in the Maryland General Assembly convene by delegation during the Legislative Session. Unlike standing and special committees which have representation statewide, delegations are geographic by county and/or region. Larger counties meet independently, while smaller counties are grouped by geographic region. The distinct regions and their membership are determined by MGA leadership.

The Senate has eleven total delegations, including regional delegations for the Eastern Shore, Western Maryland, Southern Maryland, and Northern Maryland. Many meet weekly, including Baltimore City, or bi-weekly, including Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, and Prince George's. Some met in combined House and Senate Delegations, such as Howard, Montgomery, and Eastern Shore. However, the MGA website indicates that some of the Senate delegations did not meet at all during the 2022 Legislative Session, including Harford, Western Maryland, Southern Maryland, and Northern Maryland.

The House has 27 total delegations, including one for each of Maryland's 24 counties in addition to regional delegations such as Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland, and Western Maryland. Many met weekly, including Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Frederick, Harford, Howard, and Eastern Shore. Montgomery County went a step further and convened 1-3 times per week, sometimes as a full delegation and others within policy committees. Howard, Montgomery, and Eastern Shore delegations met combined with House and Senate membership. Many delegations met less frequently, such as the Southern Maryland delegation meeting a total of five times, Cecil and Charles meeting twice, and Carroll and Western Maryland meeting once. There were delegations who reported zero meetings during Session, including Allegany, Garrett, Washington, Calvert, St. Mary's, Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, & Worcester.

Public communication of meetings, agendas, and streaming platforms vary among the General Assembly's 38 total delegations. Some delegations pre-scheduled consistent meeting times throughout Session that were all posted together upon opening day, including Eastern Shore and Baltimore City. Others posted meeting times during the week of each meeting. The detail of meeting agendas posted on the MGA website varied by delegation as well. Some delegations, such as Howard and Baltimore County, posted detailed agendas with specific bills to be discussed or voted upon. Others posted general announcements of bill hearings, voting sessions, guests, and committee meetings, such as Montgomery and Anne Arundel. Many did not post an agenda before or after meetings. Finally, most livestreams are available on YouTube while Baltimore City House & Senate delegations opted to livestream on Facebook instead.

Anne Arundel County

The Anne Arundel Senate delegation, chaired by Sen. Sarah Elfreth, met bi-weekly during Session for a total of four meetings. Perhaps their largest discussion of an education-focused bill occurred early in Session with the debate and voting on SB364. Sponsored by Anne Arundel Senator Bryan Simonaire, SB364 sought to establish a process for Anne Arundel County parents to challenge school curriculum and "have a voice in the curriculum process". The bill would have required that 3% of district stakeholders sign a petition, leading to a hearing and vote from the Board. Sen. Simonaire and Sen Reilly spoke in support of the bill, with Sen. Simonaire stating that the "core of the debate" is who is the expert and whether parents have a right to meaningful participation, while Sen. Reilly agreed that this would force the Board to respond. Sen. Elfreth and Sen. Beidle spoke in opposition, with Sen. Elfreth indicating that there are already opportunities for parents to engage in the process, Sen. Beidle stated her concern that "I think it should be up to the educators to set the curriculum". Sen. Elfreth and Sen. Beidle both stated that they have not received a single email from constituents about curriculum and asked Sen. Simonaire what the testimony submission counts were, which he claimed were four favorable and five unfavorable. However, testimony reports on the MGA website show four favorable, three of which were less than three sentences each, and nine unfavorable, all of

which were at least one full page of testimony, one three pages long. Sen. Rosapepe offered an amendment that would establish expectations for the Board to respond to concerns as well as a committee to review concerns and report back monthly. In response, Sen. Simonaire accused Sen. Rosapepe of attempting to “hijack a bill” and being “disrespectful to parents”. While the amendment passed in delegation, the bill itself died in committee in the Senate early in Session.

The Anne Arundel House delegation met weekly for eleven total meetings, led by Chair Del. Mike Rogers and Vice Chair Del. Heather Bagnall. A central concern among the delegation was the processes and public access to the Board of Education. In discussion on HB95, sponsored by Del. Bagnall, Del Pena-Melnyk noted that Board meetings are marathons, with votes happening as late as 2am. HB95 would set a time limit on meetings to last no longer than six hours, which is within the average meeting time currently according to Del. Bagnall, although some meetings last over ten hours. The bill was ultimately withdrawn by the sponsor.

The House delegation hosted various guests throughout Session, including a Covid briefing from County Executive Pittman and County Health Officer Kalyanaraman. Superintendent Dr. Arlotto spoke with the delegation for the final time before his retirement. Dr. Arlotto spoke about Blueprint implementation, stating “we all want Blueprint to succeed” and detailing the immediate budget needs in order to compensate educators in accordance with the Blueprint. Del. Chisholm asked about educator recruitment efforts and specifically what staffing numbers were needed to implement the Blueprint. Dr. Arlotto outlined the need for 54 ½ positions for pre-k expansion, 17 positions directly tied to community schools, and a focus on special education recruitment in alignment with Blueprint initiatives. Members of the Board of Education spoke with the delegation about the Blueprint in another meeting, with Board President Tobin stating “we all want this to succeed” but as things hit the ground, things become apparent that were not before, including early childhood funding streams, staffing, NBCT salary enhancements, and community school administration.

The Baltimore City Senate Delegation met weekly, led by Chair Sen. Cory McCray. In addition to bill hearings and voting sessions, the delegation hosted "Grassroots Briefings" on various policy issues, including education. Education was the topic of discussion at the January 24th briefing, featuring guest speakers State Superintendent Mohammed Choudhury, BCPSS CEO Dr. Sonja Santalises, and BTU President Diamontae Brown. Dr. Santalises spent much of her time speaking about Covid testing but also mentioned that BCPSS is looking to use the American Community Survey Data from the census to identify highest need schools in relation to Blueprint Concentration of Poverty designations. BTU President Brown spoke in support of SB157 which would add a SMOB and compensate Board members, noting that Baltimore City is one of only two counties in Maryland which do not compensate Board members at all. Additionally, President Brown spoke against the permanent closures of four schools identified by the Board. Echoing language from Strong Schools Maryland communication to Team Leaders, the presentation by President Brown stated that "the Blueprint for Maryland's Future expands community schools because we know how they positively impact communities. Permanently closing community schools in Baltimore is in direct opposition to this key initiative and educational equity as a whole."

SB157 was a topic of debate in the Senate delegation in February. Sponsored by Sen. Jill Carter, the bill intended to add a SMOB, adjust election processes for SMOB, increase voting rights for SMOB, and study compensation for Board members. Sen. Carter started discussion by stating that SB157 is "already a thoughtful and somewhat watered down bill from what a coalition of hundreds of stakeholders worked on for two years", adding that students are closest to the issue and have a right to decision processes which impact their lives. It was noted by Sen. Carter that the Board of School Commissioners introduced an amendment to the surprise of the sponsor which struck nearly all aspects of the bill which related to the SMOB, which Sen. Carter urged the delegation to reject. The delegation invited a representative of the Board to speak before the delegation, despite no such invitations offered to student organization ASCBC who was instrumental in the crafting of the language with Sen. Carter, and no opportunity for public comment. The Board representative explicitly stated that they had not had any conversation with student leaders in ASCBC in the crafting of their proposed amendment. Sen. Antonio Hayes also

introduced an amendment which would keep the election process changes while striking the additional SMOB and the expanded voting rights of the SMOB. Sen. Hayes claimed his amendment reflected the lack of “maturity” of students, stating they would be acting “without even having the experience at such a young age to pay a mortgage or take care of a family”, despite these not being requirements for adult Board members. Senate President Bill Ferguson concurred, saying “they don’t have that legal authority to sign a mortgage”, which he states is a “conflict” in allowing them to vote on budget matters as they are “minors under the law”. Sen. Hayes amendment passed.

The House delegation, chaired by Del. Stephanie Smith, discussed the same bill crossfiled as HB533 by Del. Melissa Wells. The amendments adopted by the Senate delegation were outlined and debated, with a focus on getting the bill passed overall after years of delay already on this issue. The House voted to move the bill as amended, aligning the language with the Senate. The bill moved through the House and Senate and is now before the Governor. Other meetings of the House included briefings from Senator Cardin, Valerie Munroe, Senator Van Hollen, and State’s Attorney Maryland Mosby.

Baltimore County

The Baltimore County Senate delegation met bi-weekly throughout Session, totaling seven meetings led by Chair Sen. Kathy Klausmeier and Vice Chair Sen. Charles Sydnor, III. The delegation debated and voted upon bills related to the BCPS Board of Education, including SB55 and SB414, both sponsored by Sen. Sydnor. SB55 sought to bring BCPS into alignment with all other counties in the process for retaining counsel. The bill eventually passed both the House and Senate and is now before the Governor. SB414 addressed the processes for Board membership and election of officers. It included an appointment by the County Executive to the Board as well as an adjustment of the number of votes needed to elect officers. Moalie Jose, BCPS Board of Education member, spoke as an individual in support of the bill. Sen. West spoke in opposition, stating that he had concerns about the current County Executive appointing a Board member as he feels CE Olszewski has not been supportive of a

new Towson High School and other school construction initiatives. SB414 passed out of the Senate but died in committee in the House.

The Baltimore County House delegation met weekly for a total of 11 meetings during Session. Led by Chair Del. Pat Young and Vice Chair Del. Ben Brooks, the delegation posted prior to meetings detailed agendas with specific bill numbers. They also hosted guest briefings from County Executive Johnny Olszewski, Jr., Senator Cardin, Senator Van Hollen, Congressman Sarbanes, and BCPS Superintendent Dr. Darryl Williams. In his briefing, Dr. Williams outlined BCPS key initiatives, including accelerated learning, data literacy, Covid-19 mitigation & safe and supportive school environments. Dr. Williams outlined public engagement efforts throughout the fall, noting that “the nature of trauma is that there are no quick fixes.” Sen. Salling asked about strategies to get families involved, to which Dr. Williams uplifted the 92% attendance rate as well as the hiring of multilingual staff in the communications department. In response to a question about school safety and School Resource Officers (SROs), Dr. Williams expressed that “SROs really build strong relationships with students” and that while their FY23 budget includes additional funding for counselors and social workers, “some of our SROs serve as quasi – in those roles, like counseling.” Sen. Hettleman asked about educator recruitment efforts, to which Dr. William spoke about “aggressive” recruitment efforts in Maryland as well as out of state and virtually. He noted that the Blueprint gives a baseline salary that will serve as an incentive, but that BCPS is also starting early with high school teacher academies, pathways for ESPs to become certified, encouraging staff to get multiple certifications, and tapping into HBCUs in Maryland and beyond.

A hot button bill in the Baltimore County House delegation was HB192, which expands the voting rights of the BCPS SMOB. The bill was sponsored by Del. Eric Ebersole who testified that student credibility was in doubt by delegation members, asking if Delegates have the same concerns of all new Board members or just students. BCPS Board of Education member Lily Rowe testified as an individual in opposition, claiming that because those under the age of 18 are not permitted to vote, and there is no taxation without representation, so she advocated for the delegation to vote against the bill or else “the legitimate civil rights of taxpaying adults [will] be diluted.” Del. Bhandari asked if they should teach SMOBs about the budget process, to which

Del. Ebersole responded that should then also be a requirement for all board members, as SMOBs are members of the board just like everyone else. Del. Hill noted that there is the issue of institutional knowledge for students serving only one year while other Board members serve multiple years, to which Del. Ebersole clarified that SMOBs have extensive knowledge of BCPS through their experience as a student, much more than other Board members who are not required to experience the school system as a student. Del. Szeliga attempted to quiz current SMOB Christian Thomas about the exact numbers of the current budget, laughing as she asked. Mr. Thomas responded asking if she had the same question for other Board members. Ultimately, HB192 passed the House and Senate and is now before the Governor.

Frederick County

The Frederick County House delegation met weekly throughout Session for a total of eight meetings. Led by Chair Del. Barrie Ciliberti and Vice Chair Del. Kenneth Kerr, the delegation posted detailed agendas in advance as well as open invitations with clear direction for public comment. The delegation hosted Congressman Trone for a federal briefing as well as a fiscal briefing from DLS. There were no education bills heard in this delegation.

Harford County

The Harford County House delegation met weekly totaling twelve meetings during Session. Led by Chair Del. Teresa Reilly and Vice Chair Del. Susan McComas, the delegation held a special session to discuss proposed legislation dealing with the Harford County Board of Education as well as a proposal for the election of the Harford County Superintendent. Constituents attended the meeting and spoke on concerns for the safety of Board members and the spreading of misinformation and harmful rhetoric. Board member David Bauer quoted an unnamed delegate saying they are “sick and tired of the indoctrination of our students” and pointed out that De. Griffith, who sponsors many of the bills, did not reach out to the Board about any of the proposed legislation. One educator noted the irony of the delegation meeting virtually about bills requiring in-person meetings of the Board, with another stating that these bills are clearly an attempt for some Delegates to gain “political clout”. President of the Howard County Education Association Chrystie Crawford proposed a

nominating council with the involvement of stakeholders. Tensions rose during debate among Delegates, with Del. Impallaria claiming he was being told what to do and Del. Szeliga called for colleagues not to use “inflammatory language” in debate.

The following meeting, Del. Impallaria introduced a bill which would establish a process to elect the Harford County Superintendent, claiming that the Superintendent is not answerable to the people. Del. Impallaria stated his deep concern that the current Superintendent expressed upon first meeting the delegation that his top priority for the school system was systemic racism, which the Delegate said he and his colleagues responded with shock “because we know Harford County is not a racist county and neither is our school system” saying it was “insulting to the people of Harford County”. Del. Impallaria believes that “our problems in the Harford County School System, other than indoctrination, are very small – they deal with drugs, out of wedlock pregnancy, homelessness, real problems that our kids are going through. Systemic racism is definitely not even on the list, and trying to teach our kids to hate each other because of their color of skin is not proper at all.” The delegation voted for an unfavorable position.

The Harford County Senate delegation, chaired by Sen. Robert Cassilly, indicated no meetings during the 2022 Legislative Session according to the MGA website.

Howard County

The Howard County delegation combined Delegates and Senators for eight meetings throughout Session, with the Senate delegation chaired by Sen. Clarence Lam and the House delegation chaired by Del. Courtney Watson. HCPS Superintendent Dr. Martirano and Board of Education Member Watts were present for the debate regarding Howard County bill 9-22 which would permit snow days to become virtual instruction days at the discretion of the Board. Del. Terrasa asked about engagement with impacted staff groups such as HCEA, including ESPs. Del. Ebersole and Del. Watson indicated that HCEA and MSEA were comfortable with the bill. Del. Novotny expressed concern that there is no end date, arguing that the bargaining units could keep kids out of school indefinitely, to which Del. Watson assured that negotiation is on the front end of the process to ensure that this would

not be the case. Del. Kittleman asked questions about the functionality of the bill and expressed concern that there are so many units to negotiate with, to which Board member Watts explained that this is common practice to negotiate with all units, citing salary negotiations as an example, to which Dr. Martirano added that these negotiations with all units happen all the time. Del. Ebersole concurred, stating that we have to include all groups whose working conditions are impacted by this policy. Ultimately, the bill passed out of delegation.

Montgomery County

The Montgomery County Senate delegation was led by Chair Sen. Ben Kramer and Vice Chair Sen. Susan Lee and met three times during the 2022 Legislative Session. The only education-related bill which the Senate delegation debated and voted upon was HB243 which adjusts the scholarship for the Montgomery County SMOB to be equal, to a certain limit, to the costs of annual tuition, fees, room and board for a resident undergraduate student within the University System of Maryland. This bill passed unanimously out of delegation and went on to pass in both the House and Senate, moving to the Governor.

The Montgomery County House delegation met more frequently than all other delegations, totaling twelve meetings and averaging 1-3 meetings per week. Led by Chair Del. Marc Korman and Vice Chair Del. Al Carr Jr., the House delegation has four committees within the delegation, including the Metro Washington Area Committee, Economic Development Committee, Land Use, Transportation, and Public Safety Committee and Education, Elections, and Housing Committee. The Education, Elections, and Housing Committee discussed and voted upon MC2622, sponsored by Del. Carr which corrects some maps to account for changes made by Montgomery County and unites Kensington, including a historically Black neighborhood, into a School Board district. The bill passed the committee unanimously. Similarly, MC2422, sponsored by Del. Qi, passed unanimously out of committee. MC2422 addresses the data disaggregation on race and ethnicity of MCPS student, with Del Palakovich Carr offering an amendment to add a numerical threshold of 5% to add disaggregated data once a population reaches the threshold, which Del. Stewart supported, noting

that it is responsive to population changes and potential renaming of racial categories.

Prince George's County

The Prince George's County Senate delegation met bi-weekly for a total of five meetings during the 2022 Legislative Session. Sen. Joanne Benson served as Chair of the delegation, with Sen. Obie Patterson serving as Vice Chair. Chair Benson worked to strengthen public communication from the delegation, citing the commitment of the Chair and Vice Chair to transparency and access for constituents. One education bill debated and voted upon by the delegation was SB379, addressing the process of removal of a board member in Caroline, Charles, and Prince George's County. This would remove the current requirement that the State Board of Education must have the approval of the Governor to remove a local Board member, bringing these three counties in line with existing practices of all other counties in Maryland. This bill had bipartisan support from all 24 counties. It passed out of committee and eventually passed unanimously in the Senate (44-0). SB379 died in committee in the House.

The Senate delegation also debated and voted upon HB355, which would establish a workgroup to study and make recommendations to implement a process for an all-elected Board, appropriate compensation, and phase-in period for Board composition changes as well as the election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Board and the requirement that Board members be provided with certain training materials. The largest piece of discussion revolved around membership of the workgroup, with inquiries about representation from County Council and AFSCME, with Sen. Rosapepe introduced an amendment to add a requirement that a representative from AFSCME be a member of the workgroup. Senate President Pro Tem Griffith spoke of her curiosity of the purpose of the workgroup being that the decision to shift to an elected board had already been decided. Sen. Watson clarified that the workgroup would study specifically the day-to-day workings of the Board, including training materials, ethics requirements, interaction with School CEO, etc. Sen. Jackson added that the workgroup membership needs to be inclusive of all bargaining units, including SEIU and PGCEA, to which Sen. Rosapepe added such

bargaining units to his amendment. The amendment and bill passed unanimously. HB355 eventually passed both the House and Senate and moved to the Governor.

Carroll County

The Carroll County House and Senate delegations met once this Session as a collective delegation. At that time, Del. April Rose was elected as Chair of the House delegation, while Sen. Justin Ready retained Chair of the Senate delegation. During this meeting, SB436 was discussed which would increase the compensation of members of the Carroll County Board of Education as well as clarifying that a SMOB may serve only one term. This bill passed with bipartisan support, with all members voting yes and Del. Pippy abstaining. SB436 passed both chambers and moved to the Governor.

The Senate regional delegation, including Carroll and Frederick Counties and chaired by Sen. Justin Ready, did not indicate any meetings on the MGA website.

Cecil County

The Cecil County House Delegation was led by Chair Del. Kevin Hornberger and Vice Chair Del. Jay Jacobs. The House delegation met twice during the 2022 Legislative Session and discussed bond initiatives, nature center funding, and a state park proposal. No education specific bills were brought before the delegation.

The MGA website offered no detail on a Senate delegation including Cecil County.

Western Maryland

The House Western Maryland delegation met once during the 2022 Legislative Session on April 1st. This meeting was led by Chair Del. Wendell Beitzel and Vice Chair Del. Haven Shoemaker and featured briefings from Senator Cardin and Congressman Trone. No education bills were brought before the delegation this Session.

The Senate Western Maryland delegation, comprised of Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties and chaired by Sen. George Edwards, did not indicate any meetings during the 2022 Legislative Session on the MGA website.

Southern Maryland

The Southern Maryland delegation, comprised of Charles, St Mary's, and Calvert Counties, kicked off with election of leadership. The Delegation heard a briefing from the Superintendents of the three school systems in the delegation, including Dr. Curry from Calvert County, Dr. Maria Navarro from Charles County. And Dr. Smith from St. Mary's County. Dr. Curry spoke about Calvert Tots, a program which supports parents on children birth-3 on "the basics". Calvert County Career and Technical Academy Head Carrie Aikens was recognized as CTE Administrator of the Year. Dr. Curry expressed his biggest worry for the future was the budget in order to support the Blueprint, sharing that Calvert saved a lot while things went virtual and for the current year's budget, the school system asked for only \$1 more than the previous year and instead used reserve funds, something that they are unable to do for FY23. "The state formula works well and provides a significant increase for us this year," Dr. Curry stated. In Charles County, Dr. Navarro spoke on the partnership between CCPS and the College of Southern Maryland offering tuition free higher education by piloting the new Early College Program. Dr. Navarro shared updates on new curriculum materials, tutoring opportunities and summer programming, and pre-k expansion plans. Dr. Smith spoke about St. Mary's County Public Schools, including recovery programming, about two fifths of students in either a dual enrollment or CTE program, Superintendent's Student Leadership Advisory Council, new school based health centers at two middle schools, and a joint task force for equity. Dr. Smith shared that the Blueprint does an excellent job of promoting "the top-tier educators that our students deserve" but recognized the dire shortage of educators statewide, with universities across Maryland only producing about 2,000 new teachers per year which does not match the need. Dr. Smith argued the necessity of SB640/HB1426, stating that the funding formula put forward by MSDE funds less than last year, resulting in the necessity of flat funding for Maintenance of Effort minimums. Following their presentations, Del. Morgan expressed concern about the mask mandates remaining. Del. Wilson responded with his personal experience having

spent a week in the ICU despite being fully vaccinated and having pulmonary embolisms in both lungs, remarks which Del. Morgan responded to with laughter. Del. Jones concurred with Del. Wilson by thanking the Superintendents for making decisions based on scientific facts and recognizing that children bring things home to adults in their families.

Eastern Shore

The Eastern Shore delegation met jointly with Delegates and Senators weekly throughout the Session for ten total meetings. Del. Steven Arentz served as Chair with Del. Johnny Mautz as Vice Chair, establishing a joyful camaraderie among members. Weekly meetings were advertised on the MGA website as “information and questions and answers from various organizations for members of the Eastern Shore Delegation and their constituents.” Each meeting featured briefings from officials such as Sen. Van Hollen and organizations such as the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation.

At their February 25th meeting, the delegation welcomed Mr. Taylor, Worcester Superintendent and President of the Eastern Shore of Maryland Education Consortium which is composed of Eastern Shore Superintendents. Mr. Taylor urged the delegation to “sustain state education funding as outlined in the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future,” citing the need for these funds to strengthen early childhood education opportunities and resource students with unique learning needs. He additionally asked the delegation to oppose legislation which would take local control away from local Boards of Education and Superintendents. Mr. Taylor closed his remarks by saying “by helping our schools, you are helping our young people.” Del. Ghrist assured that members of the delegation are already working in partnership with many counties on Blueprint implementation and asked Superintendents to support legislation which would add members to the AIB to increase “geographic representation”, to which Mr. Taylor vocalized the support of ESMEC. Talbot Superintendent Griffith noted that members of the AIB have been proactively invited to visit schools on the Eastern Shore. Sen. Carozza uplifted the letter written by ESMEC requesting flexibility on the timelines for Blueprint implementation. Dr. Andes of ESMEC responded that LEAs are proactively working on

their local implementation plans and were awaiting the new implementation timeline from the AIB. Sen. Carozza expressed the concern of her constituents in the transparency of curriculum and requested support in establishing a pathway for parents to get clarity on the curriculum. Somerset Superintendent Gaddis uplifted the progress of his district in transparency of curriculum by publishing connections to state standards on the website as well as the town hall on curriculum they hosted, to which only two parents attended.