



Maryland Association of
Elementary School Principals

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School Principals
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Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice Chair, and (Education, Energy, and the Environment) committee members. My name is Christopher Wooleyhand, I am the executive director of the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals, a professional organization with members from all 24 Maryland districts. Our organization provides service, support, and advocacy for current and aspiring school leaders across this great state. I am here to speak in favor of SB598.

We believe Senate Bill 598 should be an easy decision for Maryland lawmakers. The current state board includes students, parents, and teachers. It is time to add a sitting principal. Having a school principal on the state board of education will offer valuable perspectives and insights into the practical realities of running schools.

Principals are on the front lines of education, dealing with daily challenges, interacting with students, teachers, and parents, and implementing educational policies at the ground level. Their experiences will provide a crucial link between policymaking and its actual impact on schools and students.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future has placed significant responsibilities at the feet of Maryland principals. They accept those responsibilities with grace and a firm commitment to their students. The reality is that there has been a disconnect in Maryland between building level school administrators and state level decision-makers.

Including a principal on the state board of education will help foster collaboration and communication between policymakers and practitioners, leading to more informed decision-making and improving the quality of education statewide.

Principals can offer firsthand knowledge of the needs and challenges faced by schools in their communities. This can help ensure that education policies are relevant, effective, and responsive to the diverse needs of students and schools across the state.

Thank you to Senators Kramer and Jackson for sponsoring this bill and thank you to the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee for holding today's hearing. We are grateful for your advocacy on behalf of students, parents, teachers, and, of course, **PRINCIPALS**. We hope you'll give a favorable report for SB598.

Christopher Wooleyhand, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals