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## **Prince George's County Educators' Association Takes Vote of No Confidence in School Oversight Structure**

***Governing body representing educators in the state's second-largest school district demand a return to an elected, responsive school board***

**Forestville, Md.** – Citing a laundry list of concerns, the PGCEA Representative Assembly tonight took a vote of “no confidence” in the structure of the school district’s top leadership, which they say has contributed to political cronyism, morale-damaging decisions and poor results in schools.

“We have lost the system of checks and balances in our schools,” said Theresa Mitchell Dudley, president of the Prince George’s County Educators’ Association and chair of the Representative Assembly. “Our school board is only partially elected, leaving a third of the members – as well as our district CEO and Board Chair – to be appointed by the County Executive. This leaves our members powerless and voiceless. We tried to give the system a chance, but the proof that it’s not working is evident in the state and reputation of our schools.”

Prince George’s County Executive Rushern L. Baker III took control of the district’s 14-member school board in 2013, changing the structure to a hybrid of elected and appointed members.

“Since the County Executive made that decision, test scores have not improved and our buildings are still overcrowded and unsafe,” Dudley said. “Teachers are overwhelmed, bullied by administrators and morale is at an all-time low. No wonder there’s high teacher turnover! Our students are over-tested and their social and emotional health is challenged every day. It is beyond time to take back our schools.”

The Representative Assembly, the PGCEA’s governing body, called a special meeting tonight to discuss the concerns and take a vote of no confidence. The union’s membership will also take its concerns to Annapolis at a rally next week.

The Assembly also listed as concerns several headline-grabbing incidents that they say have contributed to a negative reputation for Prince George's County Public Schools, including:

**Potential conflicts of interest:** County Executive Baker contributed \$500 dollars to Board Vice-Chair Carolyn Boston’s re-election campaign at the same time that Boston was helping renegotiate PGCPs CEO Kevin Maxwell’s nearly half-million dollar employment contract.

**Administrative bullying of teachers:** PGCEA members allege that building principals directed, and in some cases pressured, teachers to change students' grades in order to boost graduation rates.

**Scapegoating:** In light of the grade-changing scandal – which is symptomatic of a systemic problem and not isolated to one school – CEO Maxwell ordered five people to be removed from DuVal High School, including three PGCEA members.

“The current structure gives all the power to only a few people – and takes away the voice of the educators, students and community members,” Dudley said. “We’re tired of the way things are going, and we’re ready to do something about it. We are taking this important step to ensure that our students finally get the schools they deserve.”

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*With nearly 130,000 students enrolled in 209 schools, the Prince George's County Public Schools system is the second largest school district in the state of Maryland, and the third largest in both the Washington Metropolitan and Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan areas.*