

IN THE MATTER OF
REQUEST FOR REMOVAL
OF LOCAL BOARD MEMBER
RENEE DIXON

BEFORE THE
MARYLAND
STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

Order No. OR 25-06

ORDER

The State Board received a request from the Cecil County Board of Education (“local board”) pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Educ. §3-4A-02 and COMAR 13A.01.05.12 to remove Renee Dixon as a member of the local board for misconduct in office based on allegations of inappropriate and unprofessional conduct involving her questioning of Cecil County Public School students about the religion and sexual orientation of a student board member candidate. Ms. Dixon waived her right to submit a substantive opposition to the removal and requested a hearing to challenge the allegations. On August 27, 2024, the State Board voted that the request was factually and legally sufficient to support charges for removal. On August 28, 2024, the State Board issued notice of charges for Ms. Dixon’s removal from the local board for misconduct in office based on the allegations contained in the totality of the local board’s administrative filings.

In accordance with COMAR 13A.01.05.12G, the State Board transferred the case to the Office of Administrative Hearings for a hearing and proposed decision by an administrative law judge (“ALJ”) on whether Ms. Dixon should be removed from office. The ALJ conducted a hearing and issued a proposed decision on March 10, 2025, recommending that the State Board remove Ms. Dixon as a member of the local board for misconduct in office. The ALJ found that Ms. Dixon’s questioning of multiple students about the student candidate’s religion and sexual orientation and/or gender identity for determining the candidate’s fitness or eligibility for the student board member position was inappropriate, improper, and discriminatory in violation of Md. Code Ann., Educ. §26-704 and the local board’s anti-discrimination policies. The ALJ found that Ms. Dixon’s violation of the policies she was accountable for upholding as a board member instigated protests and caused irreparable harm at a high school where Ms. Dixon was supposed to be a graduation speaker.

On March 31, 2025, Ms. Dixon resigned from the local board. That same day, the local board withdrew its removal request asserting that the case is now moot due to Ms. Dixon’s resignation. Ms. Dixon’s attorney submitted a response concurring with the local board that this matter is now moot.

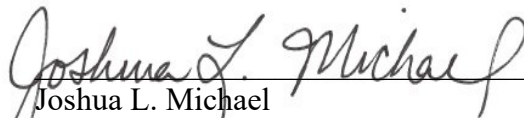
We find that the removal case is moot. The test for mootness is whether “there is no longer an existing controversy between the parties, so that there is no longer any effective remedy which the courts [or agency] can provide.” *Mallardi v. Carroll Cnty. Bd. of Educ.*, MSBE Op. No. 00-07 (2000) (quoting *In Re Michael B.*, 345 Md. 232, 234 (1997)). Ms. Dixon is no longer a member of the local board due to her resignation and the local board has withdrawn its removal request. Both the local board and Ms. Dixon, who are the parties to the removal case,

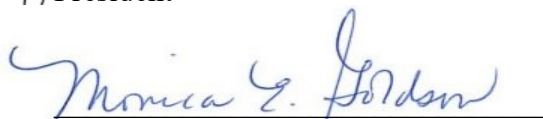
concur that there is no longer an existing controversy or dispute between them. We agree that any controversy that may have existed between the parties has been eliminated, thus there is no longer an effective remedy that the State Board can provide. *See ITMO Request for Removal of Edward Burroughs*, MSBE Order No. 22-01 (2022) (dismissing removal charges as moot after local board member resignation).¹ Accordingly, we dismiss the removal case.

Although we dismiss without reaching the merits of the removal request, we take this opportunity to caution local board members about misuse of the prestige of their office by seeking information about the personal background and personal attributes of specific students. Misuse of the inherent power of local board members leaves board members susceptible to adverse legal consequences.


It is this 29th day of April 2025, by the Maryland State Board of Education, ORDERED, that this case for removal of Renee Dixon is dismissed because it is moot.

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

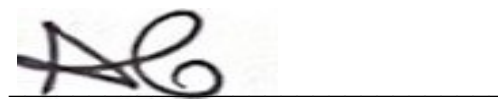

Joshua L. Michael
President


Monica Goldson
Vice-President

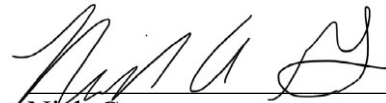

Chuen-Chin Bianca Chang


Chet Chesterfield



Kenny Clash


Abirham Gaddam
Student Member


¹ *Contra Dyer v. Howard Cnty. Bd. of Educ.*, MSBE Op. No. 13-30 (2013) (Finding removal case was not moot after local board member no longer held office where parties both argued that case was not moot because a controversy between them remained, and the future conduct exception to mootness doctrine applied.).



Nick Greer



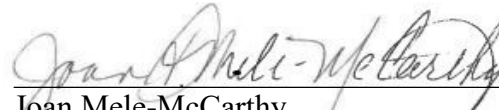
Irma Johnson



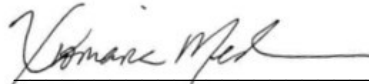
Kim Lewis



Rachel McCusker



Joan Mele-McCarthy



Xiomara Medina



Samir Paul

Absent:
Clarence Crawford