

## He's a star, but Baker's eyes are on the prize in Prince George's

Del. **Rushern L. Baker III** is widely considered a rising star in Annapolis.

When mapmakers drew a new legislative district for Prince George's County, it was tailor-made for the Cheverly Democrat to run for the state Senate.

Now, *The Gazette* has learned that Baker has been offered the powerful position of House speaker pro tem if he chooses to run for re-election (the incumbent, Baltimore County Del. **Tom Dewberry** is unlikely to seek re-election).

With **Nancy Kopp** gone to become state treasurer, Baker might well be considered a front-runner to succeed House Appropriations Committee Chairman **Pete Rawl-**

**ings** whenever Rawlings retires.

But Baker remains committed to his uphill battle to be the next Prince George's County executive. In fact, he says he is all the more committed to the campaign after pulling off the unexpected and shepherding through the bill to restructure the county's troubled school board.

But does Baker get any political pop in the six-candidate Democratic field because of his yeoman work on behalf of school reform? Opinions differ.

"He did a remarkable job over three years," said **Wayne K. Curry**, the man Baker hopes to

replace. "Rushern embarked on this course, of an unpopular position, for three [legislative] sessions, and he showed diligence and tenacity in getting it passed."

But Rawlings said that while Baker has gotten extra publicity through the legislative debate over the county's schools, "I think it's going to be short-lived ... He's giving up a big career in the House of Delegates."

Baker said he never thought about politics during his crusade to shake up the school system.

"The whole idea wasn't to get a political bang out of it but to

change the system," he said. "Whatever benefit I got out of it in terms of educating my kids is enough."

— *Josh Kurtz*