

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Opposition of
Senate Bill 78 –
Public Schools – Student Discipline
Regulations-Remedial Measures**

January 22, 2020

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners commends the Senator for attempting to find solutions to discipline issues in the classroom, but unfortunately the School Board must oppose this bill.

As drafted, the language in Section IV is so vague that it could mean nearly all discipline cases or almost none. It is concerning that the legislation would be prescriptive in a way as to require the issuance of an apology on behalf of individual students. The School Board has adopted and maintained an extensive and through Code of Conduct, which is in line with the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR and encourages restorative approaches. City Schools, at the direction of the School Boards is also working to build out restorative approaches in the school district. However, to dictate what those restorative approaches look like for individual cases would be unwise. The nature of restorative practices is that the people involved in an incident work together to determine how to make amends.

The following clause is extremely problematic:

MODIFICATION OF THE SCHEDULE OF THE INDIVIDUAL WHO VIOLATED THE CLEAR BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE CONTACT WITH THE INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS HARMED.

While it is sometimes appropriate to move a student – and schools certainly do this when they feel it is necessary and are able to do so – this should not be legislated because every situation is different, and in some cases a move is not practical. There may be no alternative class for a student to go to and, in others, changing a student's schedule could affect their ability to meet graduation requirements. It could also violate a student's IEP, which is unacceptable and would take the school system out of compliance with federal law.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners opposes Senate Bill 78 and urges and unfavorable report.

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