

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Linda Chinnia
*Chair, Baltimore City Board
of School Commissioners*

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises
Chief Executive Officer

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
Support with Amendment
House Bill 522
Public Schools – School Resource Officers and School
Security Employees – Revisions**

March 30, 2021

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners (the Board) has had the only sworn school police force in the State for approximately 40 years.. The Baltimore City School Police Force works directly for the public school system. The Board agrees that no school resource officer (as the Baltimore City School Police Force has been defined) should be involved in discipline. We have created an MOU for school police and principals with a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. As a result, we have significantly reduced student arrests over 91% over the last several years. I would also include that our Chief of Police and his team have received national recognition from their work with students. The Board also agrees that all officers that deal with our students should undergo specified training, as listed in the legislation.

The Board has one technical amendment to the legislation. Currently, on page 5 lines 23-25 it states :
“The Baltimore City School Police Force shall consult with the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners before the assignment of a school resource officer to a public school. “

We request that the Committee **replace the “Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners” with “the LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM.”** Currently, the police assignments are designated by the school police chief, who reports directly to the Chief of Schools. In order for our current practice to continue, the consultation should remain with the school system and not the school board and this change would also make it consistent with other school systems that must consult with their local law enforcement agencies.

Based on the foregoing, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners urges a favorable report, with the suggested amendment.

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