



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
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SB 870

February 22, 2022

TO: Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

FROM: Faith Leach, Director, Deputy Mayor of Equity, Health and Human Services

RE: SB 870 - Baltimore Youth Data Hub

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 870 which establishes a Youth Data Hub to help improve the quality of life for the City's youth and families.

The City of Baltimore recognizes our young people as our greatest asset. As such, it is the intention of the Mayor Scott Administration to leverage our platform, and this pivotal moment in our City's history to marshal the resources of government to support our young people. It is our goal to transform the systems that for far too long have failed to respond quickly to their needs – especially our young people and families in crisis.

In Baltimore the statistics are alarming:

- In our city there are more than 18,000 young people disconnected from school and/or work.
- Over the past five years, 208 children died in Baltimore City.
- Child fatality victims in Baltimore are predominantly (1) vulnerable infants and children, and (2) teens aged 16-17 struggling in school and involved in the juvenile justice system

Young people and their families, especially our most vulnerable young people like the ones described above often are receiving government services and touching multiple systems. Imagine if these systems were able to share data, and tailor interventions and services to potentially save lives – that is our goal with the Baltimore Youth Data Hub.

The Baltimore Youth Data Hub is an integrated data system, linking data across youth-serving organizations into an anonymous system subject to community oversight and strict guidelines, to improve quality of life outcomes for all of our City's young people.

It brings together communities, providers, policymakers, and researchers into partnership, to make informed decisions as they create and implement programs and policies designed to eliminate disparities and achieve equitable outcomes for the success of Baltimore's youth and families.

Through the data hub, we are adding world-class IT capacity to our data systems. By partnering with technologists who have experience in both securing and anonymizing data we will create both the technical infrastructure required to protect this information, but also the analytical capacity to turn that data into action. Being able to use data and analysis to understand how our work has impacted youth over generations is foundational to deepening our impact and healing our communities.

Data are a public trust, and being good stewards of our data resources entails not just protecting it but seeking the most effective and ethical means for leveraging it. We can and must do both, and the Youth Data Hub can demonstrate best practices in both data management and use. We need *every tool* available to us to improve health and education outcomes; to heal our children from trauma; and to mitigate the continued impact of generations of inequity and injustice, and that means making better use of our collective data resources.

Mayor Scott has prioritized data governance, privacy, and transparency, and the City intends to bring these practices to bear in the implementation of the Youth Data Hub. The Baltimore Youth Data Hub concept has at its core best practices in data security, privacy, and warehousing – tools like anonymization, multifactor authentication, encryption, and transparent governance. Upon this foundation, the City and its partners can combine data to build deeper insights about our children's intersecting services and needs, identify service gaps, and stage more effective interventions.

Baltimore cannot afford to leave opportunities for better and more equitable health and education outcomes for our children on the table, nor can we afford to expose our precious data resources to attack or theft. The Youth Data Hub will enable the City and its partners to change the direction of our children's lives and protect our most valuable data resources.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on SB 870.