

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Support with Amendment
House Bill 428 Community Schools –
Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund – Establishment**

March 26, 2024

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners is supportive of the legislation that would establish the Rental Assistance For Community School Families Program. However, the concern is the language amended onto the bill that would require a community schools coordinator, a local school or a local school system to identify eligible student households and facilitate direct payments. School systems, schools and community school coordinators are not equipped, nor have the resources to facilitate payments or identify all eligible students.

The school board suggests that this program is best handled fully by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). DHCD should consult with the local school system in this program, but that the Community Schools Coordinator, a local school or a local school system shall publicize the Rental Assistance Program and direct families to apply that are interested in the program directly to DHCD. DHCD shall be required to review applications and administer the program, inclusive of accepting payment. The school system, community school coordinator, nor schools should be involved in payments to the program.

9.9-104.1

Page 7, lines 12- 15

(F) THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COORDINATOR, A LOCAL SCHOOL, OR A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM SHALL PROMOTE THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ~~[IDENTIFY ELIGIBLE STUDENT HOUSEHOLDS AND FACILITATE DIRECT PAYMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (E) OF THIS SECTION].~~

Page 7, lines 16-19

(G) (1) THERE IS A RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL FAMILIES FUND. (2) THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND AND SHALL REVIEW ALL APPLICATIONS AND FACILITATE DIRECT PAYMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (E) OF THIS SECTION.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports with amendment, House Bill 428 and urges a favorable report.

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