

**Testimony of the  
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners  
In Support with Amendments  
Senate Bill 756 –  
Primary and Secondary Education  
School Safety and Student Well-Being – Examination of  
Policies and Funding**

**February 28, 2024**

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports Senate Bill 756 which seeks to increase the annual appropriation to the Safe Schools fund. Additional provisions of the proposal include an expansion of activities that qualify for grants. These are much-needed funds for the Baltimore City Public School System. The cost to implement a weapons detection system throughout our high schools is estimated to be \$6 million. The estimated cost for interior locks and the replacement of interior doors, is \$27.8 million.

School security is a major priority for the district, and we have achieved significant progress in several key areas:

- Development of a comprehensive school safety program, including ongoing analysis of school-based incidents that impact our students and school communities, resulting in the development of formal revisions and updates to make entry procedures more secure and standardized across the district.
- As an enhancement to our current school security system utilizing traditional metal detectors, the district recently completed a successful pilot using more modern weapons detection systems in our high schools. In addition to more accurate detection, the systems we piloted streamline student entry by allowing high volumes of students to pass through the system at one time.
- The district already utilizes extensive security equipment, including CCTV and an automated visitor entry system. In mid-January, the CEO of the school system briefed the Board on the district's development of a comprehensive roadmap (City Schools Safety Program) to enhance safety standards and services across City Schools. This program is aligned with the current needs of our students and staff, while also leveraging guidance and resources from federal, state and local resources (i.e., Maryland Center for School Safety, Maryland State Department of Education, U.S. Department of Education).

As an amendment to the legislation there should be no sunset on the \$10 million required to work on plans that the school system must submit and to ensure all funding is to supplement and not supplant.

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For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports with amendment Senate Bill 756 and urges a favorable report.

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