

**Testimony of the  
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners  
Letter of Information  
Public Schools – Restorative Practices Schools – Establishment**

**February 28, 2024**

City Schools anticipates significant fiscal impact from the proposed legislation, and wishes to cite several concerns.

First and foremost, the bill requires appointment of a restorative practices coach at every public school. This shall be a full-time position that reports directly to the principal. However, the bill includes no funding for these positions (which will easily total more than \$1 million), nor does the bill specify how this requirement is meant to interact with the myriad requirements cited in the Blueprint – many of which school systems are still struggling to accommodate.

In addition, the proposed legislation in no way reflects how City Schools is organized as a district. For example, restorative practices as a practice lives within our Wholeness Office under the Schools Office. Behavioral Health lives in two places – Nursing under the Schools Office, and then in Special Education with our related service providers and social workers. Even appointing a behavioral health coordinator would be difficult in City Schools since several offices occupy that space from different angles.

The bill alludes to the collection of school-level data and required reports on performance metrics but, again, in no way specifies how such reports would interact with the numerous reports required under the Blueprint.

The Board supports restorative practices as one manner in which to work with students, but there are also other research based and effective practices that other school do and may use to support their students. Restorative practices is valuable, but not the only “tool in the tool box.”

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners submits this informational letter to let the committee understand the challenges with the legislation, but would ask that funding be included and start as a pilot for school districts that wish to use restorative practices at all of its schools.

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