

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Support with Amendments
Senate Bill 483
Solid Waste Management – Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion
Food Residuals**

February 10, 2021

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports the efforts contained in Senate Bill 483 and supports with amendments to make it possible for the school district to comply with the mandates.

The school board has been proactive in reducing food waste, including:

- Using paper-board trays instead of polystyrene trays
- Using compostable spork kit instead of plastic cutlery
- Piloting temperature sensors in refrigeration units
- Trained all FNS staff on ways to reduce food waste, including through improved marketing and presentation
- Partnering with food rescue operations for produce boxes
- Investing in farm-to-school education via our Great Kids Farm
- Supported the Baltimore City Office of Sustainability's Zero Waste Plan

The school board would therefore like to support the bill, but as written, it has large operational and financial implications with no associated funding, therefore the school board suggest the following amendments to be considered and adopted in order for the school system to comply with the requirements:

1. **Include funding for implementation.** Costs to comply include:
 - Staff training and time – support from the Schools Office and individual principals will be crucial,
 - An FTE position at the district office would be helpful to allow a centralized focus on ensuring compliance.
 - Education for students and school community
 - Materials for composting stations (bins, buckets, toter, dolly, etc.)
 - Storage containers
 - Hauling/processing fees (note that if successful, we may be able to reduce the frequency of trash pick-up, which could result in some cost savings but would not offset the new costs)
2. **Phase in the compliance period.**
 - Rather than requiring all schools to comply at once, a phased-in approach would allow school systems to pilot in a subset of schools before expanding to all.
3. **Clarify that if a processing facility exists within 30 miles, it must have the capacity to handle the food waste.**

- While there is a facility within 30 miles of some of our schools (though not our district office), it is currently unwilling to accept our large volume of waste.

The goals of this legislation are admirable. Based on the foregoing, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports SB 483 with amendments.

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