

# BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Testimony of the  
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners  
In Support, with Amendments  
House Bill 71  
Juvenile Services Education Board and Program –  
Establishment, Powers, and Duties**

**January 28, 2021**

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners understand the importance of this legislation and wants to ensure that it contains additional information to make it clearer as it is implemented, should it become law.

The proposed legislation would not have significant impact on the operations or finances of City Schools Office of Whole Child Service and Support, Office of Enrollment, Choice, and Transfers, and Office of College and Career Readiness. However, there are broader implications and concerns for the school system that should be addressed.

Should the bill go into effect after review, the Re-Engagement Office of City Schools indicates that two (2) Staff Specialists at a cost total of \$176,000 (inclusive of benefits and salary for two) would be needed to support the transfer of materials and school placements/transitions, to monitor students' progress, as well as to collaborate/coordinate efforts with the DJS and the school system.

The Baltimore City School Board ask that members of the Juvenile Services Education Board include someone that aligns with priority components of the county boards of education because Baltimore City has one of the few schools for detained youth in jail facilities, called Eager Street Academy. The school board is concerned with implications for Eager Street Academy. Page 9, line 11 states: EDUCATIONAL STAFF IN THE DEPARTMENT SHALL BE SUBJECT TO THE CAREER LADDER AND SALARY PROVISIONS OF THE BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE. The concern is that should Eager Street staff be shifted under this model, there are implications for their salaries.

On page 11, line 5 it states: EACH COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL WAIVE ALL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING REQUIRED COURSEWORK, FOR A JUVENILE WHO IS COMMITTED TO THE CUSTODY OF THE DEPARTMENT AND IS SUBSEQUENTLY TRANSFERRED TO THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM WHILE IN GRADE 11 OR 12. The school staff feel strongly that students in custody, or otherwise, need basic educational requirements and should adhere to the predetermined requirements for graduation.

There is currently a regulation that a new student to City Schools who enrolls in the 12th grade is not subject to the local school board's graduation requirement. For example—we require a fourth math, not every district at Maryland does. A student who comes in during the 2nd semester of senior year is held harmless.

As written, every student must meet graduation requirements to be awarded a Maryland High School Diploma, as defined COMAR 13A.03.02. There should not be an exception granted for students who are

committed to custody. Instead, the department, in consultation with student and family, should develop an education recovery plan for each student that is being released.. The plans should consider various pathways (i.e., reenrollment in the public school, an alternative education program, G.E.D program, etc.) and be shared with the program that is ultimately selected.

Additionally, the requirement of funding is problematic. The county Board must reimburse the Department for basic costs if the student was in the FTE count. The concern is that it is not an even swap. Many students go back and forth or are incarcerated or in custody not for a full year. How is the difference to be determined?

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports with amendments, House Bill 71.

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