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SB 630

February 17, 2021

TO: Members of the Budget & Taxation Committee

FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 630 – Education – Adult High School Pilot Program – Funds and Granting

POSITION: Support

Chair Guy Guzzone, Vice Chair James Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 630.

SB 630 authorizes the Adult High School Pilot Program to provide grants to certain pilots; defining "pilot" as an adult high school established by an operator under the Program and requires the Governor to include an appropriation of \$250,000 in the fiscal year 2022 budget and an appropriation of \$500,000 in the fiscal year 2023 budget for the Program.

In Baltimore city there is estimated over 60,000 adults over the age of 18 that do not have a high school diploma, and although many enroll in alternative adult diploma programs, very few of them are able to earn their high school diploma. A large number of these same individuals have a literacy level below 9th grade, which contributes to their lack of persistence in alternative adult education programs, such as G.E.D. preparation programs. The adoption of adult high school programs by the state as an alternative pathway for residents to receive their high school diploma marks a recognition of the need for programs that have strategic wrap around supports to alleviate barriers to success, including: mental health, child care, academic interventions, and dual enrollment in high school and industry recognized certifications.

The South Baltimore Adult High School is an institution founded on the community school model to provide a pathway to a diploma and career advancement for adult learners as they achieve College and Career Readiness Standards. Core education services for the school will be provided by Baltimore City Community College, to include a continuum of academic and career development services to meet the needs of the adult learner. In addition to the high school pathway to success, the campus will also offer additional services traditionally available to adult learners. This includes: Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, GED®,

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Workforce Development and Career Technology Education (CTE) Programs, and Dual enrollment and transition to college certificate and degree programs. Learner supports and community engagement are an essential component of the South Baltimore Adult High School. Elev8 Baltimore, Inc. (Elev8), The Cherry Hill Development Corporation (CHDC), and other community partners will provide wraparound services to assist in removing student barriers.

The Mayor's Office of Children & Family Success supports the South Baltimore Adult High School as a critical element in the landscape of opportunities for adults to continue their education & access opportunities to meet their potential. The Baltimore Children's Cabinet has also named support for the adult high school as a key priority for 2021.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 630.