**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Support, with Amendments
Senate Bill 497
Juvenile Services Education Board and Program –
Establishment, Powers, and Duties**

**April 1, 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.  We also request that proper notice requirements to alert local school systems of when a juvenile is placed in custody and alert timely when the juvenile is to be released.

The proposed legislation would 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, like some other school districts has a facility for detained youth and many of these students have special education needs.  We ask that the Juvenile Services Education Board be charged with working with school boards to report on how to care for dually enrolled students who have special education plans before the disposition of their case.

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 could become problematic.   The county Board must reimburse the Department for basic costs if the student was in the FTE count. We believe the time has come for the General Assembly to  charge the Juvenile Services Education Board with studying funding processes and formulas and make recommendations to the General Assembly about how improvements can be made to the funding formula that would not overly burden the local school system.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports with amendments, Senate Bill 497.

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