

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor, City of Baltimore

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Chair, Baltimore City Board
of School Commissioners

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises
Chief Executive Officer

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Support
House Bill 418
County Boards of Education –
Symbols of Hate – Policy**

February 5, 2021

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners (the Board) supports House Bill 418 because it supports a statewide ban on the display of Confederate flags, nooses, swastikas, and other symbols of hate on school grounds, which is consistent with the school board's recently enacted policy that aims to disrupt and dismantle inequities in every area of our work. A statewide approach to prohibit the use or display of these symbols on school grounds would also support and honor the experiences, cultures, and humanity of students absent from the dominate framing and narratives traditionally taught in schools.

The Board has adopted an equity policy after staff work with community leaders and partners to develop a policy to include all. The school board has been working to eliminate inequitable practice systems and structures that create advantages for some students and disadvantages for others. We work everything through an equity lens. This legislation will only complement the ongoing work of the school district and help to foster a cohesive, nonconfrontational atmosphere in the school system.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports House Bill 418 and urges a favorable report.

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