

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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of School Commissioners

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Testimony of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners Support with Amendments Senate Bill 528 – Climate Solutions Now Act

February 15, 2022

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports the building of net zero energy schools and applauds the sponsor for recognizing the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Baltimore City Public Schools currently has two net zero energy schools, Holabird Academy and Graceland/O'Donnell Heights. The sponsor recognizes the need for funding to build net zero energy schools. However, once the net zero schools are built, there are additional costs associated with operating and maintaining the schools. Ongoing monitoring by staff and technology ensure the net zero goals are met as well as the need for training of staff on new building systems. There will be a need for specialized tools such as diagnostic meters and programs for servicing new building systems. Any additional funding made available to help with these additional costs after construction would be beneficial.

The school board understands the sponsor's zero-emission school buses that are not diesel-powered. However, we would suggest "incremental costs" definition found on page 22 of the bill also include the cost of installing and maintaining charging infrastructure. The Board would also suggest that boards of education be given additional time to implement a contract for the purchase or use of zero emission school buses to fiscal year 2027 because electric buses cost much more than diesel buses and there needs to be funding and time to establish a sufficient infrastructure such as meter upgrades, charging stations, etc.. It would cost approximately \$200,000 per bus to upgrade from diesel to electric.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners urges a favorable report with amendments.

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