

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Jhnette A. Richardson
Chair, Baltimore City Board
of School Commissioners

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises
Chief Executive Officer

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Opposition of
House Bill 448
Nonpublic Education – Placements of Children
With Disabilities – Teacher Salaries (Teacher Pay Parity Act)**

March 28, 2023

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners understands the necessity of appropriate pay for teachers. However, it must oppose this legislation as it places an unfunded mandate on the school district as it would mandate that the local school system fund “pay parity” for teachers at nonpublic special education schools.

The Committee should be aware of the funding challenges that exist in Baltimore City for special education. A school system that has one of the highest special education student populations in the State. In Baltimore City, the school board spends approximately \$300 million on special education services and receives only \$80M. This legislation only exasperates the issue of funding in Baltimore City schools.

The legislation as initially introduced did not propose an unfunded mandate and is now contrary to the State’s obligation to fund its required share of nonpublic placement costs of students. The school board must oppose any unfunded or underfunded mandate.

For the forgoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners opposes House Bill 448 and urges an unfavorable report.

Dawana Merritt Sterrette, Esq.
Director, Legislative and Government Affairs
dsterrette@bcps.k12.md.us
443-250-0190

Melissa Broome
Director, Policy and Legislative Affairs
mcbroome@bcps.k12.md.us
443-525-3038