

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
Support with Amendment
House Bill 888
Education -Prekindergarten Alternative Teacher Preparation Program
- Authorization and Reporting**

March 1, 2023

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports House Bill 888 as another manner in which local school boards can support the mission of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and find qualified teachers during a very significant teacher shortage.

As many know, Maryland is an import state for teachers. The state university's and colleges do not produce enough teachers and there is an active and ongoing recruiting process outside of the state to fill positions, especially in the critical shortage areas of special education, mathematics and even science. Prekindergarten teachers and prekindergarten paraprofessionals are another area in which there are not enough individuals to support the ongoing needs for school districts in light of the Blueprint requirements.

An area in which the City School Board would like to amend the legislation deals with the ability to recruit and maintain teacher assistants in prekindergarten. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation requires pre-kindergarten teaching assistants to have a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate or an Associates degree by the 2025/26 school year. At present, approximately 75% of City School's paraprofessionals do not meet this qualification, although more than 70% have at least 10 years' experience. In order to ensure individuals with significant experience successfully working in these roles are not displaced from their positions if they are unable or disinclined to meet these new requirements, the legislature should modify the Blueprint law to include alternative approaches for pre-K paraeducators, commensurate with their years of experience.

For the forgoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports, with amendment, House Bill 888 and urges a favorable report.

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