

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Support of
Senate Bill 821 – Primary and Secondary Education –
Student immunization – Temporary Admission Period**

February 21, 2025

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports Senate Bill 821 Primary and Secondary Education – Student Immunization – Temporary Admission Period. This legislation requires each school board to grant temporary admission to schools if a parent or guardian is unable to provide proof of immunization, but present evidence that the student has an appointment for the immunization with a health professional or local health department.

Currently, the law requires that all students from preK through 12th grade receive age appropriate immunizations. Schools must have proof of the immunizations before a student can start school. The required immunizations are:

Varicella: Two doses for students entering grades K–10

Tdap: For students entering grades 7–12

Meningococcal: For students entering grades 7–12

Students may be able to request a religious exemption if they have strongly held religious beliefs that contradict getting the vaccine

To make it easier for students, the Baltimore City Health Department offers vaccine clinics for students throughout the year.

Current law allows students with proof of an appointment within 20 calendar days to be temporarily admitted or temporarily retained in school until the immunization occurs. If the immunization does not take place within 20 calendar days, the student must be removed from school.

The goal of every school board is to have all students in seats and learning. Allowing parents and guardians additional time affords the student the ability to be in school and to learn. This extension of time will also help with chronic absenteeism, as any absence, excused or unexcused counts.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports SB 821 and urges a favorable report.

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