

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
Support with Amendments Senate Bill 526
Counties – Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks –
Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools.**

March 4, 2025

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports any action that will allow safe routes to school. However, it is imperative that the General Assembly include funding to allow for additional funding, outside of the current capital improvement plan for the construction of sidewalks. As written, this legislation would present an adverse fiscal impact on the district. The impact is largely related to staffing. The need for additional state funding is necessary to make this legislation possible.

As drafted, the bill would require the district to create a report that identifies: (I) areas of the county where a student would be ineligible for transportation based on distance and (II) pathways that a student may use to travel using only a safe alternative route(s).

Significant staff time would be required in order to create and complete the report and its three phases:

(1) create a GIS map identifying the areas where students would be ineligible for transportation based upon distance requirements, (2) complete an in-person survey of the areas that surround each public school (160+) within the district to identify and document safe, alternative routes between home and school within the boundaries identified on the GIS map, and (3) detail these safe routes within the final report to be posted on the district website.

City Schools believes approximately 20-30 hours of staff time per school would be required in order to meet these requirements and produce a comprehensive report. In addition, we expect most of these staff would have to be hired as our current staff are not likely to have the time to support an analysis of this magnitude while still maintaining current duties.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports with amendment to seek additional funding to support the mission of House Bill 811.

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