

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Opposition of
House Bill 1127
Public Schools – Water Safety and Swimming – Instructional Content,
Plan, and Reporting**

March 3, 2025

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners understands the sponsors concern about water safety and swimming and wanting to integrate instructional content on this subject in the health and physical education curriculum. The concern is ensuring there is access to swimming pools and the ability to take swimming and water safety courses in Baltimore City.

Most schools in Baltimore City do not have working and/or swimming pools. Those few high schools with swimming pools are not always, due to the lack of capital dollars in the best working condition. There are not enough recreation and parks facilities with indoor pools for students to have access in the colder months and few outdoor recreation and park facilities in the City of Baltimore to allow outdoor swimming courses.

Costs would be incurred with partnering with public and private facilities to ensure student access such as rental fees. There may also be fees associated with using the City of Baltimore swimming pools for maintenance. There would be a need to ensure there are lifeguards and a Water Safety Instructor certification for persons if schools do not currently have such a certified person on staff.

The other issue in an urban environment is transportation costs. The Board would need to bus students to and from swimming locations, which would add significant costs.

There would be costs associated with development of an age appropriate instructional content, along with professional development for physical education teachers. And, to ensure that our students with disabilities have access to water safety, in some instances, specialized equipment (e.g. pool lifts, water wheelchairs) would be needed.

While the bill does not specify state funding support, it requires LEA's to develop strategies to minimize costs and leverage public/private partnerships. However, without dedicated funding, the financial burden will fall on local school systems.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners opposes House Bill 1127 and urges an UNFAVORABLE report.

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