



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB 870

March 29, 2022

TO: Members of the House Ways and Means Committee
FROM: Faith Leach, Director, Deputy Mayor of Equity, Health and Human Services
RE: SB 870 - Baltimore City Youth Data Hub - Establishment

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 870.

In Baltimore, we recognize our young people as our greatest asset. As such, it is the intention of the Scott Administration to leverage our platform, and this pivotal moment in our City's history to marshal the resources of government to support our young people. It is our goal to transform the systems that for far too long have failed to respond quickly to their needs – especially our young people and families in crisis.

In Baltimore the statistics are alarming:

- In our city there are more than 18,000 young people disconnected from school and/or work.
- Over the past five years, 208 children died in Baltimore City.
- Child fatality victims in Baltimore are predominantly (1) vulnerable infants and children, and (2) teens aged 16-17 struggling in school and involved in the juvenile justice system

Young people and their families, especially our most vulnerable young people like the ones described above often are receiving government services and touching multiple systems. Imagine if these systems were able to share data, and tailor interventions and services to potentially save lives – that is our goal with the Baltimore Youth Data Hub.

The Baltimore Youth Data Hub is an integrated data system, linking data across youth-serving organizations into an anonymous system subject to community oversight and strict guidelines, to improve quality of life outcomes for all of our City's young people.

It brings together communities, providers, policymakers and researchers into partnership, to make informed decisions as they create and implement programs and policies designed to eliminate disparities and achieve equitable outcomes for the success of Baltimore's youth and families.

Through the data-hub, we are adding world class IT capacity to our data systems. By partnering with technologists who have experience in both securing and anonymizing data we will create both the technical infrastructure required to protect this information, but also the analytical capacity to turn that data into action. Being able to use data and analysis to understand how our work has impacts over generations is foundational to deepening our impact and healing our communities.

Data are a public trust, and being good stewards of our data resources entails not just protecting it but seeking the most effective and ethical means for leveraging it. We can and must do both, and the Youth Data Hub can demonstrate best practices in both data management and use. We need *every tool* available to us to improve health and education outcomes; to heal our children from trauma; and to mitigate the continued impact of generations of inequity and injustice, and that means making better use of our collective data resources.

Amendments

The Ways and Means Committee made a number of amendments to HB 1276, the crossfile of this bill, when it was heard in committee the other week. We appreciate the Committee's attempts to provide more clarity the bill language, however, in hearing SB 870, we hope the Committee would reconsider a few of those amendments. Our goals are to align the two bills, and balance the Committee concerns with the successful operation of the Youth Data Hub.

Specifically, one amendment removes the reference to the, "City Council of Baltimore City," which would limit the data sharing authorization in the bill to only agencies under the Mayor's Office. The Baltimore City Youth Datahub legislation was meant to apply to all City agencies. Additionally, the amended definition of provider would limit data providers to the City, Baltimore City Public Schools, and Baltimore's Promise. It is our belief that the definition of provider should be broader to ensure collaboration with other public agencies (i.e. state agencies). Finally, the initial version of the bill exempted the data hub from the Open Meetings Act and Public Information Act. It is important to include a narrow exemption from these two statutory requirements so that the executive committee can engage in effective evaluation of data requests without violating any privacy protections regarding personally identifiable youth data. We are fine with the other amendments made to House crossfile.

Baltimore **cannot afford** to leave opportunities for better and more equitable health and education outcomes for our children on the table, nor can we afford to expose our precious data resources to attack or theft. The Youth Data Hub will enable the City and its partners to change the directions of our children's lives **and** protect our most valuable data resources.

We respectfully request a **favorable with amendments** report on SB 870