

**Testimony of the  
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners  
In Support of House Bill 1390 –  
School Safety Grant Program – Extension**

**February 27, 2024**

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports House Bill 1390 because the School Safety Grant funding has been invaluable in the schools. Ensuring the safety of students and staff and securing school buildings is paramount concern to the school board. Because of the need, it is important to understand the sobering cost implications for security upgrades. For the past three years, City Schools has received approximately \$800,000 annually via the School Safety Grant Program. By contrast, the cost to implement a weapons detection system throughout our high schools is estimated to be \$6 million. The estimated cost for interior locks and the replacement of interior doors, is \$27.8 million.

School security is a major priority for the district, and we have achieved significant progress in several key areas:

- Development of a comprehensive school safety program, including ongoing analysis of school-based incidents that impact our students and school communities, resulting in the development of formal revisions and updates to make entry procedures more secure and standardized across the district.
- As an enhancement to our current school security system utilizing traditional metal detectors, the district recently completed a successful pilot using more modern weapons detection systems in our high schools. In addition to more accurate detection, the systems we piloted streamline student entry by allowing high volumes of students to pass through the system at one time.
- The district already utilizes extensive security equipment, including CCTV and an automated visitor entry system. In mid-January, the CEO of the school system briefed the Board on the district's development of a comprehensive roadmap (City Schools Safety Program) to enhance safety standards and services across City Schools. This program is aligned with the current needs of our students and staff, while also leveraging guidance and resources from federal, state and local resources (i.e., Maryland Center for School Safety, Maryland State Department of Education, U.S. Department of Education).

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Below are examples of how the Board used the funds from the grant program:

FY19

Single point entry Sinage - \$355,626  
Locakable classroom doors - \$756,425

FY 20

Metal Detectors at all middle/high schools – \$207, 200

FY21 and FY22

Emergency egress plans for the entire district, one card access for some buildings, 4 secure vestibules- \$866,000

Single-door controlled access for School Police and Operations for emergency response and system checks in City Schools owned and managed buildings and Schools not part of 21C program (106 buildings) - \$568,630

FY 22

Install emergency evacuation plans, stairwell markings and exterior door markings - \$510,998 (all school buildings)

FY23 –

Access control systems - \$900,000

Secure Vestibule Pilot (4 schools) - \$950,000

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports House Bill 1390 and urges a favorable report.

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