

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor, City of Baltimore

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*Chair, Baltimore City Board of
School Commissioners*

Gregory E. Thornton, Ed.D.
Chief Executive Officer

July 16, 2014

The Honorable Bernard C. "Jack" Young
President, Baltimore City Council
City Hall, Room 400
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202



**RE: Position Statement
City Council Bill 14-0177R**

Dear Council President Young:

On June 16, 2014 you introduced the above-captioned bill requesting that Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) report to the City Council on whether a complete education is being provided to students, including the availability of arts education and physical education in our schools, and the extent to which students have access to vigorous and broad educational opportunities as part of their core curriculum.

City Schools is committed to ensuring that all students receive rigorous, engaging instruction tailored to their individual needs. Board Priority 1 of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners requires that "City Schools will have quality curricula and instruction that provide rigor, engage students, raise the bar and deliver targeted interventions to increase learning." We recognize the important roles that both arts education and physical education play in preparing our students for success in college and their careers, as well as assisting in their development as well-rounded, healthy individuals.

In the area of arts education, City Schools is committed to offering an arts curriculum that sets high achievement standards, while allowing for instructional flexibility. The curriculum is based on national arts standards, as well as the Maryland State Curriculum (MSC). The MSC is a curriculum which has been vetted by educators and community members from across Maryland and has been approved by the Maryland State Board of Education (MSDE).

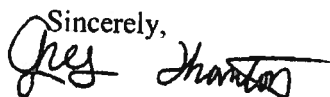
All schools must provide an instructional arts program, taught by a certified fine arts teacher, which is comprehensive and sequential in visual and performing arts (art, dance, music, and/or theatre). Recommended scheduling is two to five hours of instruction in the arts weekly for both elementary and middle grades. High school students must complete one credit of fine arts (taught by a certified fine arts teacher) in order to graduate.

City Schools fully recognizes that physical education (PE) is a critical element in the academic achievement and overall wellbeing of our students. Guidelines for PE programs for all schools are as follows:

All schools, including charter schools, **must provide a physical education program** for students in grades PreK-12, taught by a **certified physical education teacher**. All schools must provide a systematic and sequential physical education program with a fitness component that includes a fitness assessment for students and tracking of their individual scores through all grades, provided by a **certified physical education instructor**.

- Schools must follow a physical education program that enables students to meet expectations of the Maryland State Curriculum, grades PreK-8 and 9-12.
- Schools must provide a physical education program in grades 9-12 which enables students to meet graduation requirements and provides opportunities for students to select electives.
- Each school should utilize a fitness assessment tool, *The FitnessGram and/or President Physical Fitness Challenge*, to measure students' fitness level and report results to the Physical Education office and the Cooper Institute (only if the FitnessGram is used).
- Schools must provide an Adaptive Physical Education program to meet the needs of the diverse learner.
- Schools can partner with a physical education organization, but this does not eliminate the requirement for a certified physical education teacher.
- High school students must take the Personal Fitness Course (12623), taught by a certified physical education teacher, as a graduation requirement.
- High school students are required to earn a .5 credit in physical education in a course taught by a certified physical education teacher.
- At the high school level, physical education teachers must be certified and able to teach swimming [*Required certification courses include CPR, First Aid, Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) Training, Lifeguard and Water Safety Instructors (WSI)*].
- All schools should provide opportunities for professional development for physical education teachers each year.

In summary, let me assure you of my intent to provide a standard of care that ensures access to a world class curriculum, including highly skilled teachers in both academics and the arts, to every student in Baltimore City. Thank you for inviting us to participate in this process.

Sincerely,


Gregory E. Thornton, Ed.D.
Chief Executive Officer

C: Dawana Sterrette, Legislative Liaison