

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Marnell A. Cooper
*Chair, Baltimore City Board of
School Commissioners*

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises
Chief Executive Officer

April 18, 2017

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 17-0018R

Dear Council President Young:

On April 3, 2017 the Baltimore City Council introduced the above-captioned bill (Resolution) to review and help reverse the recent annual reductions in crossing guard personnel, elimination of previously assigned crossing locations, and the proposed cutback of hours paid for crossing guard services.

The safety of our students is the number one priority for Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools). Ensuring that our schoolchildren can travel safely to and from school is therefore an issue of the utmost importance, and the role that school crossing guards play is essential in this process. In SY 2016-17 there are approximately 82,354 students enrolled in City Schools. Of these, nearly 5,000 students receive yellow bus or taxi cab transportation services. The remaining 77,000 plus students either receive corner to corner services (which require students to walk to and from designated bus stops), walk to school, or ride Maryland Transportation Administration (MTA) buses.

As stated in the Resolution, crossing guards are an essential part of our public safety system, with particular impact on the safety of our younger students traveling to and from school. City Schools' police have received numerous complaints from families so far this year regarding an insufficient number of crossing guards providing support; however, the school district has no authority over crossing guards and therefore must work with the appropriate city agencies on issues of placement.

City Schools therefore strongly supports the goals of City Council Bill 17-0018R. We welcome this review and will be pleased to provide additional testimony on this issue at your request.

Thank you for inviting City Schools to participate in this very important process.

Sincerely,



Sonja Brookins Santelises, Ed.D.
Chief Executive Officer