

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor, City of Baltimore

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

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

September 2, 2015

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 Resolution 15-0249R

Dear Council President Young:

On August 17, 2015 the Baltimore City Council introduced the above-captioned bill (Resolution), concerning the need for cultural competency training to serve homeless LGBTQ youths. Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) recognizes the importance of addressing the needs of this highly vulnerable student population. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with other public agencies and homeless services providers in sharing knowledge and expertise in best practices for serving these students.

In an average year, City Schools provides services to more than 2,500 homeless students. After school programs operated by City Schools are free to homeless students, and any fees associated with school activities are waived if families are unable to pay. In addition, the district provides either cab or yellow bus transportation for more than 1,100 homeless students annually.

While City Schools does not differentiate for LGBTQ students, there are many cases in which we know that a student is LGBTQ; when needed, actions are taken to ensure that students are not the victims of discrimination. Our school police receive mandatory training on multicultural sensitivity and cultural competency. Officers also attended special training on the needs of LGBTQ students offered through the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention.

City Schools would welcome any opportunities to deepen our staff's appreciation for the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ youth, particularly training for school-based Homeless Liaisons, administrators, and other school staff. Our goal is to meet the needs of every student, and we recognize that our LGBTQ students must overcome numerous obstacles if they are to be successful.

Thank you for inviting City Schools to participate in this very important process. We will be pleased to testify further on these issues upon request.

Sincerely,


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

