

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

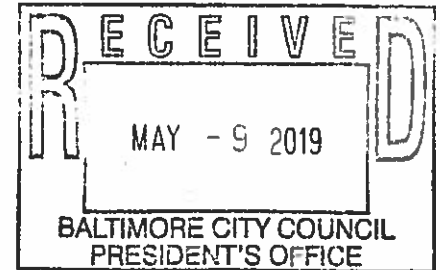
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Letter of Information
**Baltimore City Council Bill 19-0385 –
Gender-Inclusive Single-User Restrooms**

May 9, 2019



As drafted, Council Bill 19-0385 seeks to require that certain single-user restrooms in Baltimore City be made available to all individuals regardless of gender and that gender-inclusive signage be used to identify the restrooms. Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) appreciates the opportunity to provide background regarding the district's recent efforts in this area and hopes this information will be helpful in informing the Council's discussion of this legislative proposal.

City Schools is committed to maintaining an inclusive environment, where all students feel welcome and safe to participate in every aspect of academic life. In furtherance of this commitment, in April 2019, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, unanimously passed the JBB – Sex-based Discrimination (Student) policy, which includes specific language relating to facilities accessibility to all students, but more importantly, includes specific language relating to transgender students.

Specifically, the policy states: *Students shall have access to facilities that correspond with their gender identities. These include restrooms, locker rooms and changing facilities. Any student who is uncomfortable using a gender-segregated facility will be provided a safe, non-stigmatizing alternative, which can include, but is not limited to: privacy curtains, partitions, use of a private office or restroom, or a separate changing schedule. Under no circumstances can any student be required or directed to use a private restroom.*

A recent study conducted by the Human Rights Campaign involving trans and gender-expansive students between the ages of 13 and 17 from all 50 states and the District of Columbia found that 51% of trans youth can never use the restrooms or locker rooms that match their gender identity; 58% indicated they cannot use the restroom that best reflects their gender because they do not feel safe using them, and; 65% identified that they do not use the bathroom at school. (HRC 2018 LGBTQ Youth Report).

Relevant to City Schools' steps towards strengthening inclusive behaviors within all schools is the term, *non-stigmatizing*. Recognizing the challenges encountered whenever there is change to existing policy, or even more, when there is a paradigmatic shift in social norms, the policy does permit for a student's request to use a single-user restroom. This allowance is afforded to any student who has indicated a discomfort in using a gender-segregated lavatory. By their very

Comments

