

CITY OF BALTIMORE

SHEILA DIXON, Mayor



BOARD of SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM  
200 E. North Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
Telephone: 410-396-8709  
Fax: 410-545-3613

May 12, 2008

The Honorable Mary Pat Clarke  
Chairman, Education Committee  
Of the Baltimore City Council  
City Hall  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

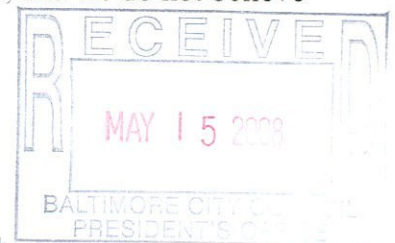
Dear Madam Chair:

City Council Bill 08-0093 would modify the start of the daytime curfew for minors. Specifically, the bill would make it unlawful for a parent of any minor under the age of 16 to knowingly permit, or by insufficient control, to allow that minor to be in or about any public place or any establishment between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. on any day during which the minor is required to be in school. Furthermore, it prohibits an establishment from knowingly permitting any minor under the age of 16 to remain on the premises of that establishment during the same time period. The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners commends your efforts and the City Council's efforts to address truancy and to find innovative ways to ensure that students are in school and learning. However, modifying the daytime curfew would interfere with our student's ability to travel freely to and from school, therefore we respectfully request that the legislation be withdrawn or voted unfavorable.

The Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) has a very extensive bell schedule for the upcoming school year. (See attached). This bell schedule is made in consultation with principals, teachers, parents and the Mass Transit Association (MTA). Many schools begin their instructional day after 7:45 a.m. with some as late as 9:00 am, which means students will be traveling to school during the time in which the curfew prohibits minors from being "in any public place". Many of our high school students participate in work – study programs which give them real world opportunities as a part of their educational experience. Additionally, two charter schools have days in which their school day ends prior to 2:30 p.m. which would again cause minors to be violating the current law, if they were to be found in a public place or any establishment.

The manner in which the law is drafted provides no exceptions for students that are traveling to school during the prohibited hours. The law specifically indicates it is unlawful for the minor to be in any public place or establishment between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. on ANY DAY DURING WHICH THE MINOR IS REQUIRED TO BE IN SCHOOL. Should a student have an early dismissal, for any reason, technically, the student is violating the law if he or she would go to an establishment or public place during the prohibited hours, and we do not believe that is your intention.

*Clarke*



Additionally, the incremental denial of our students rights to be on the premises of an establishment or in a public place to do something as simple as buy a soda or juice prior to or after school seems to further cast our students in the category of disruptive and deviant which the overwhelming majority are not. We cannot and will not support any initiative that infringes upon the rights of the students even if the initiative is rooted in the best of intentions. Curfews such as this may only foster the general public's negative perception of our children.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners respectfully request that the legislation be withdrawn or have the Education Committee vote it unfavorable. If you have any questions, please contact me or Dawana Merritt Sterrette, Esq., Legislative Liaison at the above number.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian D. Morris". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "B" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Brian D. Morris  
Chairman

Cc: Dr. Andres Alonso  
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners  
The Honorable Sheila Dixon  
Angela Gibson



