

# BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

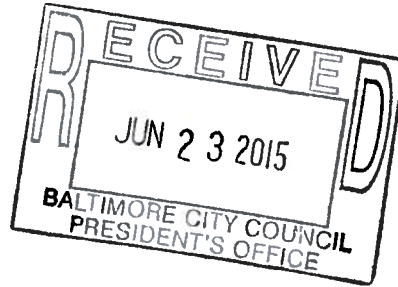
**Stephanie Rawlings-Blake**  
Mayor, City of Baltimore

**Shanaysha M. Sauls, Ph.D.**  
Chair, Baltimore City Board of  
School Commissioners

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

June 16, 2015

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



Re: Position Statement  
City Council Bill 15-0541

Dear Council President Young:

On June 1, 2015, the Baltimore City Council introduced the above-captioned bill, for the purpose of prohibiting the distribution of *flavored tobacco products* within 500 feet of any elementary, middle, or secondary school. Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) supports the proposed bill, because this legislative action expands City Schools' current prohibition (Board Rules, Article 8, Section 807.03, School Facilities, Prohibition of Smoking on School Premises). Additionally, City Schools supports this bill for the following reasons:

- The well-documented hazards of smoking remain a concern, regardless of the product's flavor.
- Curriculum and health hazard experts often teach resistance skills to help children learn to say "no" to offers of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. In addition, students are more likely to smoke in a location where they see other students and adults smoking.
- Children are especially sensitive to the effects of secondhand smoke. Passing by an outdoor smoking area may trigger an asthma attack, or worsen breathing problems for students and adults with certain health conditions.
- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) ranks Maryland as having the highest prevalence of asthma in children and adults, compared to other states nationally.

City Schools therefore supports City Council Bill 15-0541, which we believe will benefit the children and families of Baltimore City. We will be pleased to testify regarding our support. Thank you for inviting City Schools to participate in this process.

Sincerely,

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