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# HEARING NOTES

**Resolution: 21-0035R**

**Informational Hearing – “Passing Through” Baltimore City Public School Students**

**Committee:** Education, Workforce, and Youth

**Chaired by:** Robert Stokes, Sr.

**Hearing Date:** Thursday, April 8, 2021

**Time (Beginning):** 5:00 PM

**Time (Ending):** 7:05 PM

**Location: Virtual “WebEx” Meeting**

**Total Attendance:** Approximately 80

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Robert Stokes, Sr. James Torrence

John Bullock Sharon Green Middleton

Antonio Glover Zeke Cohen

Phylicia Porter

**Bill Synopsis in the file?**  **yes**  **no**  **n/a**

**Attendance sheet in the file?**  **yes  no  n/a**

**Agency reports read?  yes  no  n/a**

**Video or audio-digitally recorded?  yes  no  n/a**

**Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?**  **yes  no  n/a**

**Evidence of notification to property owners?**  **yes  no  n/a**

**Final vote taken at this hearing?  yes  no  n/a**

**Major Speakers**

*(This is not an attendance record.)*

* Sonja Santelises, CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools
* John Davis, Baltimore City Public Schools
* Rachel Pfeifer, Baltimore City Public Schools
* Dennis Betzel, Public Testimony/Speaker
* Andy Pierre, Public Testimony/Speaker
* Dontae Ryan, Public Testimony/Speaker
* Evette Matthews, Public Testimony/Speaker
* KJ, Public Testimony/Speaker
* Jovani Patterson, Public Testimony/Speaker
* Kim Trueheart, Pubic Testimony/Speaker

## Major Issues Discussed

1. Chairman Stokes gave opening remarks and informed the attendees how the hearing would be conducted. He said, “I don’t want the hearing to be focused on just the August Fells School but to be more substantive than just this one case within the school system.”
2. CEO Santelises gave opening remarks, introduced her team and gave a PowerPoint Presentation. *A copy of the Presentation is on file.*
3. The committee/council members asked questions, made comments, and etc. Some highlighted topics of discussion were
   * *Open Enrollment*
     + *Student Head Count* 
       - *Can you explain the process for the head count for students and how the head count changes if a student(s) transfers to another school?*
   * *School Leadership*
     + *What do you consider good leadership qualifications for Principals?*
   * *Grade Change* 
     + *What is the process and/or protocol for a grade change for students?*
     + *Can you walk us back through how students are ranked?*
   * *Promoting/Passing Students* 
     + - *Why are students being passed to the next grade level when he/she is not qualified to do same?*
       - *Passing grade point averages; what is the process? Are students being passed along inaccurately?*
       - *Talk about some of the strategies used when students get off track; to get them back on track*
   * *Special Need Students*
     + *There is an over-concentration of special need students in our schools! What are you doing to help these students?*
     + *These students often face learning challenges and academic barriers.*
   * *Findings and/or Investigations*
     + *What type of data are your looking at?*
     + *What type of flags are being raised?*
   * *Effective Communication*
     + *What happen with the “lapse of communication” between the staff at Savage Fells and parents?*
   * *Principals*
     + *What is a transformational Principal? What are their duties?*
     + *What kind of support are the Principals receiving when needing assistance and/or help?*
   * *Comments/Remarks*
     + *Our children deserve a quality education!*
     + *It takes a whole village to address the matter at hand*
     + *What type of support do you have with your community partners?*
     + *Reach out to the City Council for help if needed! That is why we are here!*
     + *Our schools are not overfunded!*
     + *Kirwan funding is long overdue!*
4. Public testimony was received from seven (7) attendees/speakers. Some highlighted comments and/or concerns raised were:
   * *Press Release Wording*
     + *Racist policy – What policy is this? And when was that policy instilled?*
   * *Concerns:*
     + *Importance of students being:*
       - *Job Ready*
       - *College Ready*
       - *Strengthening job ready and college ready curriculum*
     + *About the situation at August Savage; schools are failing our children!*
   * *Counselors*
     + *More Counselors are needed in our schools*
     + *More Counselors are needed per student ratio; one Counselor per 400 students is not enough!*
   * *Oversight/Internal Audits*
     + *BCPS should be receive constant oversight by the City Council*
     + *Internal audits of the BCPSS should be made public*
5. The chairman gave brief closing remarks, thanked everyone for participating and stated, “This is the first of several hearings; we will invite the representatives from the BCPSS back for further discussion.” Meeting recessed.

## Further Study

**Was further study requested?  Yes  No**

**If yes, describe.**

1. Per Chairman Stokes, the committee will reconvene the hearing at a later date to further discussion (more oversight is needed) the issue at hand.



Marguerite Murray Currin, Committee Staff Date: April 9, 2021

cc: Bill File

OCS Electronic File