

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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City Council Bill 22-0256 Public Safety Apprenticeship Program Advisory Commission

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Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) has reviewed Council Bill 22-0256, which seeks to establish a Public Safety Apprenticeship Program Advisory Commission. As passed by the Baltimore City Council last year, the Public Safety Apprenticeship Program is a program for recruiting, mentoring, training and hiring Baltimore City youth and young adults to prepare them for careers in law enforcement, fire suppression, emergency medical services, and emergency management. The goals and objectives of the program include exposing Baltimore City youth to public safety careers, as well as building better community relations efforts between the City's public safety agencies, youth, and the community.

As drafted, the purpose of the proposed advisory commission is to facilitate the Public Safety Apprenticeship Program in several ways. Responsibilities are extensive and include providing oversight, advice and recommendations to the fire chief and police commissioner regarding program policies and procedures; providing recommendations to better use the program and provide equitable career pathways into public safety professions; helping to develop community engagement and recruitment initiatives focused on attracting youth and young adults from Baltimore City; and creating a program-specific mentorship model to be implemented in the program.

In addition, the advisory commission is to conduct compliance reviews of the program to ensure equity during the employment and training process, and field and review complaints from program participants and provide assistance in resolving the complaints.

With respect to City Schools, the bill requires the advisory commission to convene a five-member subcommittee, of which one member will be an individual designated by the Baltimore City Public School System. City Schools respectfully requests more information regarding the role and responsibilities of the subcommittee. For example, it would be helpful to know if the subcommittee is tasked with providing quarterly briefings to the commission and, if so, whether the subcommittee or commission will be staffed.

It would also be helpful to understand how the advisory commission will interact with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Maryland Department of Labor, both of which currently serve as oversight bodies for City Schools' official youth apprenticeship programs through the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program.

Given the outstanding questions outlined above, City Schools cannot support the bill in its current posture. We remain committed to working with the Mayor and Baltimore City Council to promote the importance of access to public safety apprenticeships, and would welcome the opportunity to work with the sponsor to determine a way forward that addresses our shared concerns. We look forward to participating in further discussions regarding Council Bill 22-0256.