

# BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Bernard C. “Jack” Young**  
*Mayor, City of Baltimore*

**Linda Chinnia**  
*Chair, Baltimore City Board of  
School Commissioners*

**Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Letter of Information  
**Council Bill 20-0242R (Resolution)**  
**Informational Hearing: Maryland Transit Administration’s Pandemic Response and the  
Upcoming School Year**

September 9, 2020

Council Resolution 20-0242R seeks to inform the Baltimore City Council of the Maryland Transit Administration’s response to the COVID pandemic and the potential implications for the upcoming school year. Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) will begin the 2020-21 school year virtually, with the goal of offering in-person instruction options to families later in the fall.

Transportation represents a critical component in meeting the educational needs of City Schools’ students and has long been a priority of Dr. Santelises’ Administration. Students in grades six to twelve who live greater than one and half miles from their school are eligible for an MTA fare card. In school year 2019-2020 there were about 29,000 students who were eligible.

In order to assist with meeting student needs, middle and high school students currently utilize MTA Bus, Light Rail or Metro as their primary modes of transportation to and from school and extracurricular activities on school days between the hours of 5am to 8pm.

These hours of daily operation – in addition to the four 120-minute times of unlimited transfers – provide support to students by meeting a variety of individual educational needs. Taken from an analysis of March 2019 MTA fare data, the following findings describe, in aggregate, student usage of MTA. These findings are believed to represent general patterns of student usage throughout the 2018-2019 school year.

- Approximately 22,000 students used MTA Bus, Light Rail and Metro to travel to and from school and educational extracurricular activities. This is an estimate due to student use of both One Cards and S-Passes.
- Many City Schools’ students who are eligible for mass transit services use MTA as their primary transportation mode to school.
- On average, the vast majority of students used their MTA fare card no more than two times on the day they traveled.
- About 5,200 students used the MTA after 6:00 pm.

The educational needs of City School students are met by a network of organizations that provide staff and programs located across the city. This network includes organizations that operate after

school hours at programs located in and outside of City School buildings. The combination of MTA's reach across the city, service hours of 5am to 8pm and four 120-minute daily travel times contributes to student's participation in these activities. Some educational activities take place at times other than the hours of service on school days. For these times, students are given MTA pre-paid tickets that allow them to travel on MTA for ninety minutes with unlimited transfers. City Schools funds the purchase of pre-paid tickets from MTA. This fare allows our students to participate in educational programs across the city.

In short, the need to maintain services provided by MTA to City Schools is critical. The reach of MTA across the city, as well as the service hours of 5am to 8pm and four 120-minute daily travel times, all contribute to student participation in school and extracurricular educational activities. **Any reduction in routes or service hours will have negative implications for students, potentially reducing their participation in educational, athletic, and extra-curricular programs.**

City Schools appreciates the Baltimore City Council's attention to this important issue and looks forward to participating in further discussions.

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