

Wednesday January 17th, 2018

BMORE Demands that the Baltimore School Board Postpone the Vote on Fair Student Funding

Baltimore City Schools is attempting to make changes to the district's Fair Student Funding model. The district's new proposed formula is flawed, and the district has not given satisfactory responses to community and educator concerns. This flawed funding formula could cause schools to lose resources and programs, and lead to layoffs, surplussed staff and the further destabilization of City Schools.

BCPSS has held a series of stakeholder meetings that were sparsely attended and the presentations the District gave lacked complete information and transparency. The presentations did not contain a single slide with a side-by-side comparison of the old formula and the new proposed one. This made it hard to compare two detailed and technical formulas. The district deliberately limited the conversation at these meetings to narrowly focus on detailed aspects of the FSF formula instead of offering an opportunity for community members and educators to comprehensively review all aspects of the policy.

Next Tuesday, the School District's leadership will present a flawed policy to the School Board and claim that stakeholders were consulted throughout the process and that their input was heard. This does not reflect the reality of how this process has occurred.

The Baltimore Movement of Rank and File Educators demand the following from the School Board and CEO Dr. Sonja Santelises:

- In the immediate term, postpone the vote on the district's policy recommendations, or withdraw the plan from the Tuesday School Board agenda.
- In the short term, continue to hold community forums on the FSF model. Practice authentic community engagement by holding forums in a wider variety of locations. Visit PTO, SFC and Faculty Meetings to inform people of the changes and publicize them.
- In the short term, publish an easily available tool that allows the public to see the difference in school budgets under the old formula and different iterations of the FSF model.
- In the long term, widen the scope for future stakeholder meetings to include topics such as FSF implementation and other funding models beyond FSF, including the staffing model, a BMORE FSF funding proposal and racial equity block grants as proposed by Dr. Lawrence Brown

The ten year analysis of Fair Student Funding should be more than just a cursory review. The district's stakeholder engagement has not satisfactorily answered a very important question: are market and competition based education solutions worth carrying into a second decade? This is an opportunity for our district to be visionary and inventive and create a funding system that more closely aligns with our values and creates the foundation for a more positive future for our children. We have to learn from our mistakes. We believe that the children in Baltimore's public schools deserve better than the currently proposed FSF model and for that reason, we urge the School Board to delay the vote and we demand that BCPSS leadership withdraw their plan for further community input.

Sincerely,

Email the BMORE Steering Committee at bmorecaucus@gmail.com