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**Remarks to the Maryland State Board of Education
Supporting the Adoption of COMAR 13A.01.06 Educational Equity and COMAR
13A.04.18 Program in Comprehensive Health Education**

Good morning President Sumpter and members of the Board. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.

I am Brandon M. Scott, Baltimore City Council President, and I am here to urge that this board adopt COMAR 13A.01.06 Educational Equity and COMAR 13A.04.18 Program in Comprehensive Health Education. I strongly believe that both of these policies are important and necessary changes that will benefit all students.

Children are truly our most important asset. We need to do everything possible to ensure that all our students receive a rigorous and quality education. This is especially important for marginalized students, such as African-American, immigrant, and LGBTQ students. I care deeply about equity. Here in Baltimore City, I am working to replace outdated inequitable policies and bring an equity framework to all aspects of governance. In order to enact the change we want to see for our children we have to have good equitable policies in place.

Currently, too many of our young people do not see themselves in the curriculum. Black students, speakers of other languages and students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer are often not adequately represented. Centering all aspects of education with an equity lens will show these students that they matter, they are seen, and they are valued. I urge this board to implement the Educational Equity regulation.

I also support the passage of 13A.04.18 Program in Comprehensive Health Education. This policy dovetails with the Educational Equity policy by ensuring that all students see themselves in the curriculum. Requiring that “Maryland family life and human sexuality instruction shall represent all students regardless of ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression” will be life changing for our LGBTQ students. This ensures students are represented and able to learn correct and inclusive information about sexuality and gender. This is an important and positive change.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak in favor of the adoption of these two regulation changes.

October 22, 2019

Re: COMAR 13A.12.01.07 Educator Licensure

President ~~General~~ Sumper, Vice President Halle, Members of the Board, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. My name is Garima Bhatt Handley. I, along with my colleague Tavon Lawrence, lead the Baltimore City Teaching Residency or BCTR. Over the past year, my colleagues and I have closely followed the work of the Maryland State Board of Education to reimagine teacher licensure and development. It is our belief that the proposed regulations for educator licensure (13A.12.01.07) reflect the board's fervent commitment to ensuring that students across Maryland have consistent access to effective and diverse teachers.

BCTR has recruited, selected, trained and certified over 2,500 teachers over the last 17 years to teach in high-need schools in Baltimore City. Today, 1 in every 10 Baltimore City Public Schools teachers were trained through BCTR. This year, 55% of our Residents identifies as Black, 66% identify as a person of color overall and nearly 75% came from right here in the great state of Maryland. We believe that a single great teacher has the potential to be life-changing for a student and as a result, we hold our Residents to high standards. When it comes to the foundation of our training program, we believe it is essential that our teachers have strong content knowledge, build authentic relationships with students and receive active in-class coaching and feedback so they grow and develop quickly as new teachers. In Dr. Steiner's 2019 paper on Curriculum Literacy for New Teachers, he mentions new teachers should receive rigorous coaching and support from mentor teachers who are knowledgeable and skilled in how to use curriculum effectively. We couldn't agree more. Our program is built on the belief that new teachers need coaches in classrooms alongside them, modeling best practices and giving feedback on instruction delivery and materials in-the-moment so teachers get better, faster. At the heart of the proposed regulations is a stronger focus on mentoring and support while teachers are in the field, which we believe, is when it matters the most.

Now, we understand, that the proposed regulations will require all teacher preparation programs across the state to make significant structural changes. Tavon and I, along with our team of coaches and instructors will have to make adjustments to many components of our program which will ~~likely~~ require additional time and resources. However, we also understand that the status quo isn't working. We need to do better. We continue to see large opportunity gaps along the lines of skin color, socio-economic status, gender, language and general vs. special education across the state of Maryland.

The proposed regulations can be transformational for students across the state and our students deserve no less.

On behalf of BCTR, ^{we} ~~sincerely~~ appreciate the time, thought, and dedication that ~~each member~~ of the Maryland State Board of Education has invested in the ~~thoughtful~~ development of the proposed regulations on teacher licensure.

Thank you.